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**Life of father
Benvenuto
Bambozzi, tr.
and abridged,
by a ...**

**Niccolò Treggiari,
Benvenuto
Bambozzi**



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L I F E
OF
FATHER
BENVENUTO BAMBOZZI, O.M.C.

SOME TIME MASTER OF NOVICES OF THE CONVENTUAL PRIORS-MINOR.

BY THE
REV. FATHER NICHOLAS TREGGIARI, O.M.C., D.D.
OF THE SAME INSTITUTE.

Translated and Abridged from the Second Edition
of the Italian Original,
WITH AN APPENDIX ON THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETO.

BY
A LAY-TERTIARY OF SAINT FRANCIS.



LONDON :
1879, 18 PATERNOSTER ROW.
1879.

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To My Father
This Translation
is
Affectionately Inscribed.

Author's Protest.

IN obedience to the decrees of Pope Urban VIII., we declare that we wish no faith to be placed on the events recorded in this book, save that which rests on purely human evidence; and we submit ourselves and our work entirely to the ruling of the Holy See.

**[Published in favour of Father Benvenuto Bambozzi's
Canonization Fund.]**

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LIFE OF
FATHER BENVENUTO BAMBOZZI.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH OF BENVENUTO.—HIS CHILDHOOD.

At the dawn of the present century, which brought with it so many tribulations for the Church of Jesus Christ,—Almighty God willed in His mercy to raise up a soul, destined one day to bring help and comfort to a chosen portion of His flock. On the 22nd of March, 1809, a respectable couple, Vincent Bambozzi and Elizabeth Frontalini, peasants of Osimo, welcomed the birth of a child, who was to become a model for the priesthood, a shining light of charity, and a skilful physician of souls. On the following day he was taken to the parish church of Santa Maria in Cirignano, commonly called Abbadia, and there regenerated in the waters of Baptism.

The names Benvenuto Leopardi, bestowed on the child, are honoured and cherished in the territory of Osimo; as they recall the memory of two zealous pastors, who brought to its inhabitants the hallowed

tidings of the Gospel. S. Leopardo was in fact the first Bishop of Osimo; and was succeeded by S. Benvenuto, who, like the former, affords us a bright example of holiness of life and zeal on behalf of the Christian religion. God willed that our Benvenuto should have these glorious Saints as protectors during life, that so he might emulate their virtues, devote himself untiringly to the good of souls, and acquire those splendid gifts which open to all the way to Heaven.

In his childhood, Benvenuto showed great fondness and affection for prayer, exceeding diligence in his every day work, and such ready obedience to all his parents' wishes, that they were accustomed to hold him up as an example for his brother's imitation.

On the 12th of June, 1815, he received the holy Sacrament of Confirmation from Cardinal Castiglioni, Bishop of Osimo and Cingoli, and this new grace instilled into him that staunchness in well doing, and in leading a Christian life, which are the special gifts of the Holy Ghost. The whole family, in fact, were endowed with that straightforwardness and love of virtue, which, coupled with their native simplicity, made them content and happy with their poor earthly lot. Their home was indeed blessed, for it fostered the germs and first principles of holiness.

The following little incident will show our readers how thoroughly Benvenuto's heart was bent on serving God. The child had often heard the good folks at home talk of the dangers to which lads were exposed in going backwards and forwards to town for their schooling. Hence, when his mother told him to attend a class in the neighbourhood, Benvenuto begged to be

let off, saying that he wished to “keep good all his life;” and it was not till months later, when he saw that his brother Joseph was learning to read without becoming wicked, that he set to work to learn his letters. He then went regularly to school with his brother, and spent much time over his spelling, without, however, neglecting his work in the fields, nor any other task imposed upon him.

Spending time well came to him, in fact, like a second nature; and as he made golden use of it in his youth, so did he likewise to the end of his days. He could not bear idleness. A thousand times it happened that on his brothers shirking some unusually toilsome labour in the fields or annoying work at home, Benvenuto willingly took their place: whence his brothers declare that his kindness and persevering work had often been the means of screening their own laziness from their parents. During the long winter evenings, after learning his task as quickly as possible, he would take up the “Lives of the Saints,” over which he used to pore with delight; so much so, that he actually seemed, as he used to say in later life, to be in Paradise.

Oftentimes after his little brother Ciriaco had gone to bed, and all the family were seated for their frugal supper, the child would be heard crying because Benvenuto was not by its side. On such occasions, Benvenuto would, out of obedience to his parents’ wishes, at once leave the table, hasten upstairs, quiet his little brother, and after saying his prayers lie down beside him. This same Ciriaco affirms that he used to hear him pray several times in the course of the night. Nor did he even lose time in going to or

coming from school ; for he either prayed on the way or else looked over his task.

Benvenuto was taught, from his tender years, to deny his own will even in the most simple and harmless things, and to entertain that low estimation of self, which afterwards formed the groundwork of all his sublime virtues. His father, though inwardly admiring his son's ready obedience, his earnest spirit of prayer and attention to study, was never known to express satisfaction at these good qualities ; on the contrary, he seemed to look down upon him, and always spoke slightly of him, calling him by no other name than "Venutaccio." His mother was much gentler towards him ; yet she likewise gave him occasion to turn many little mortifications to good account, and never allowed him to have his own way in anything. As for his brothers, they not only used to make fun of his retiring habits, but even went the length of overburthening him with their own work and laying their faults to his charge. Thus it was that Benvenuto, even from the days of childhood, learnt to bear all things in holy peace, without resentment ; and even to hold back the ready word which so naturally rises to the lips in self defence. Thus again, after the example of the Saints, whose deeds had fired his enthusiasm, was he able perseveringly to offer up to God some slight sacrifices, which, being repeated day by day, all through his lifetime, enabled him later on to devote himself with such wondrous self-denying zeal to the good of souls. No one can fail to see in the conduct of his parents and brothers the finger of God's hand disposing everything in such a way, that the child Benvenuto should lay a solid groundwork

for the grand spiritual edifice which, later on, he would be called upon to raise up during his life as a Religious : on the other hand, the conduct of his family towards him would not be deserving of praise unless it were prompted by a holy motive.

In closing this first chapter, let us urge on all young people into whose hands this book may fall, to emulate this holy child in his almost scrupulous anxiety not to lose time, which is a gift of untold price. We all know full well that the end for which we were created is God ; that we are bound to know Him, love Him, and serve Him to the utmost of our power : and that there is no surer means of attaining all this than by making good use of our time, especially in studying and reading good books. As our knowledge grows wider and deeper, so—if it be well directed—shall the wish of serving God, our Maker, and of loving Him above all things, likewise grow upon us.

Let them therefore imitate Benvenuto's earnestness by making the most of their time ; let them emulate that horror of sin which made him shrink from study as long as he thought that his innocence was imperilled by it ; let them strive after that spirit of prayer which he cherished even from the springtide of life ; let them imitate that self-denial and perfect obedience to his parents in all things, provided he saw no danger of offending God ; let them, lastly, emulate his charity towards his brothers, and they shall then be like him in his other virtues also.

CHAPTER II.

BENVENUTO'S YOUTH.—DON EMIDIO BIANCHI.

THE town and parish possessing a minister full of priestly spirit may be truly said to have received a great and heaven-sent blessing, bringing peace to every household, and unspeakable good to all.

The Priest is a guide of Christian souls, and happy the man who is led by one who himself draws his light from God. “If the blind lead the blind,” says our Divine Saviour, “both will fall in the pit.” That this may not happen, we must lean on one who is led by that holy spirit, “which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.”

This blessing of God rested on the parish of Santa Maria in Cirignano in the person of Don Emidio Bianchi, a most exemplary man, who died in the odour of sanctity. This good Priest was professor of Latin in the Seminary and Upper College of Osimo; but as teaching rhetoric was little in keeping with his glowing spirit of charity, he used to help the parish Priest in all his sacred duties. The few persons, still living, who once knew him, hold him in affectionate remembrance, and speak of him in terms of veneration and love.

This worthy Priest was the first to search into Benvenuto's character, and to notice that the seeds of no ordinary virtue were taking deep root in the soul of this boy, then only eleven or twelve years old. He watched Benvenuto's modest demeanour in church, his all-absorbed reverence whilst assisting at the Divine Sacrifice, his eager eye whilst the catechism was being explained every Sunday throughout the year, and how he was storing up a treasure of Christian truths within

his soul. These and many other things did the pious Priest set down as true indications of a favoured soul, nor did he doubt that God would, in due time, call him wholly to His service. Benvenuto himself was won over by the kindly way in which Father Bianchi strove to instil his own piety into the souls of others, and so great was his love for the good Priest, that he chose him as his confessor.

Our Lord never fails to forestall us with the helps of which we stand in need; and to send a minister according to His own Heart to a soul He loves. The affection which grew up between the Priest and the boy was so holy, so strong, that no power on earth could have broken it asunder. God was the bond of this reciprocal love: Father Bianchi loved Benvenuto because he saw that God dwelt within him, and Benvenuto loved the Priest because he saw that he was united with God.

In his capacity as confessor, Father Bianchi soon judged Benvenuto fit to approach the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, and to receive the Bread of the Strong, our only sustenance on this weary pilgrimage of life. He accordingly gave Benvenuto notice to make his soul ready for the heavenly banquet. On hearing this, the boy's first feeling was one of unspeakable bliss, but later on his mind was fraught with thoughts of his own nothingness and little knowledge, which made him shrink before a mystery so awful. He, in fact, looked on himself as a poor peasant, ignorant even of his catechism and unworthy of any favour whatsoever, because of his sins. In order to smooth over these difficulties, Don Emidio undertook to prepare him personally, and to clear away any blemish

that might still be found on his soul. So well did the good Priest succeed in quickening a loving trust towards God in that young heart, and an eager longing for receiving the Body of his Divine Saviour, that he soon found it necessary to cool his ardor.

Some of his contemporaries tell us how, as the time of his First Communion was drawing nigh, Benvenuto's modesty, his earnestness in church, his attention to his parents' instructions and those of the Priest, were such as to work on the consciences of those who came in contact with him. All those who knew him, even at this early period of his life, bear witness that he seemed no longer of this earth, but rather an angel; so thorough was his goodness and spirit of self-denial. He practised mortifications in many ways, and not only sat down willingly before the coarsest of peasant's fare, but preferred eating even this without any seasoning but salt. The neighbours congratulated his parents on his reserved, modest, and edifying behaviour, which gave him the look of a novice of one of the strictest Orders in the Church. Indeed, he never fixed his eyes on any one, least of all on a woman.

Many of his neighbours vouch for the fact that they have seen Benvenuto, from his twelfth to his fifteenth year, work so hard in the fields as to get through more work than a grown-up man; and they were the more surprised when his parents told them that much of it had been allotted to his brothers, but that he had volunteered to do it in their stead.

On feast-days, in country parishes, the young men of the neighbourhood usually band together after service, and make up games and pastimes. In these merry meetings Benvenuto was seldom to be

found, not that he shunned company, or lacked friendliness towards his own companions ; on the contrary, he always met their advances with open-heartedness, and excused himself with exceeding nicety. Towards this period of his life we find him on some rare occasions joining in some simple sportive amusement, towards which he showed some liking ; but his active spirit of self-denial soon made him give it up, and whenever he was subsequently invited, he would urge some straightforward excuse to his friends, and thus stifle that craving for pleasure which, carried to access, has proved the ruin of so many souls.

Thus, whilst others were whiling away time, Benvenuto was earnestly communing with God in prayer, or intent on reading devotional books. God, who is infinitely more generous towards man than ever man can be towards Him, repaid Benvenuto with interest for these small sacrifices, by lavishing upon him heavenly favours and graces. Benvenuto's sacrifices were small, but they became great in the sight of God, because they bore the stamp of self-denial, and one and all betokened some fresh victory won over his rising passions.

As the day of his First Communion was drawing nigh, Benvenuto made ready for it by earnest prayer, holy aspirations, and ardent longing. All our efforts to gather information about his First Communion day, have, we deeply regret to say, proved fruitless ; but if we may judge from the dispositions which he evinced, and consider at the same time the loving care and zeal bestowed on him by Father Bianchi, we are bound to believe that his soul was filled with the sweetness of the Heavenly Food, the Bread of Angels, and that his heart

was overwhelmed with joy and love. We, who have heard him speak a thousand times on the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, who have watched the zealous care with which, as a Priest, he prepared children for their First Communion; we, at least, cannot but deem that day to have proved the sweetest amongst the halcyon days of his life. No record of facts could have realised the whole truth; because the mind of man has no power to conceive, nor has the tongue words to express, what a duly-prepared soul feels in receiving for the first time its God in the Holy Eucharist.

Oh, what great merit in the sight of God have not those Priests, who are continually engaged in instructing and preparing the guileless hearts of youth for the heavenly Espousals with God, and in rendering the "Great Day" one of happy memory for their future life! Theirs is truly an angelic ministry! Almighty God, in communicating Himself to a soul for the first time, wills, in His boundless mercy and goodness, to give it the greatest pledge of His love, to gladden it with His Kingly Presence, to enrich it with His choicest gifts; and we find His Priesthood giving their whole minds and hearts to the preparation and beautifying of the soul, in which God deigns to dwell under the Sacramental elements! And how thoroughly do not those Bishops and Priests fulfil their heavenly mission, in our own day, who, zealous for souls, have appointed and set apart special times to be exclusively devoted to preparing children for their First Communion, and making that day one of cherished and hallowed memory! God grant that, throughout the whole Catholic world, their example may be followed, not only on account of the immediate good which

naturally comes to the souls of the first communicants themselves, but also by reason of the edification that is given to their parents and to those who are present at the touching ceremony of a First Communion: but, above all, for the glory which is given to God in this tender solicitude for young souls.

CHAPTER III.

BENVENUTO'S CALLING TO A RELIGIOUS LIFE.

It is impossible for the human mind to dive into the hidden ways by which God calls souls to Himself, when consecrating them to His special service. Certain it is, that He respects in us that freedom which is His Own free gift, and that He never constrains any creature to do His Will in this world; but it is equally certain that His boundless mercy goes continually hovering about us, according to S. Augustine's beautiful expression, stoops to our level and points out the way we must hold in order to reach Him. At other times, indeed, our Divine Lord makes known His Will in our regard by means of signs, both extraordinary and supernatural. This is why mystic theologians distinguish between two kinds of vocation; the one ordinary and natural, the other extraordinary and supernatural.

It is very difficult to ascertain whether Benvenuto's religious calling was attended by any supernatural mark of God's special favour. If certain memoirs, written by him at his Superiors' bidding, had not unfortunately been lost, we might have cleared up this

point, which, as it is, we are bound to pass over from want of sound evidence.

In the month of October, 1874, a young man came to Father Bambozzi and showed great anxiety to enter into Religion, but complained of the wickedness of the times, which hindered him from so doing. The good Priest at once cheered him with these words : " Hardly had I begun to be able to read, than I took the greatest pleasure in eagerly conning over all the ' Lives of the Saints ' which fell into my hands. Whilst thus engaged, I felt such great consolation within my soul, such strong inward impulses, that I remained spell-bound. When, afterwards, I reflected on the virtues of those Saints ; on the zeal with which they preached the Gospel ; on the unceasing penances which they practised during life ; and again, on the supernatural gifts whereby God exalted their holiness even here below ; I felt so thoroughly fired with love, so strongly driven towards the cloister, that all resistance seemed useless." That a soul filled with grace, as was Benvenuto's, should have felt a call to the highest perfection of virtue can hardly be open to doubt. Considering, besides, what a bitter struggle he had carried on against all the allurements of life, he must have clearly foreseen the danger of not corresponding with those sweet impulses of grace, which called him away from amidst a corrupt and wicked world. Hence it was that in his inmost thoughts he courted the cloister ; his heart loved to linger there ; and there was no peace nor rest for his soul, unless his heart and his thoughts dwelt on the subject of his vocation.

Sometimes he would speak to his mother of this his

ardent longing, but she, without opposing it outright, would advise him rather to become a secular Priest ; thus hoping to better the worldly prospects of the family. His father, following his wife's lead, argued in the same strain ; but, firm of purpose, Benvenuto straightway answered : " My dear parents, if you bid me absolutely become a secular Priest, I will obey you, but after a year's time I will become a friar." Seeing him thus determined, they told him that he had better be a friar, once for all, rather than change after one short year.

Having received his parents' sanction, Benvenuto began at once to busy himself with the great work that was before him. Meanwhile, a wretched garret, previously used as a store-room, with little light, and barely furnished, was secured as his student's quarters at Osimo.

In the still loneliness of that dingy hovel, the young man rejoiced with a deep feeling of heartfelt thankfulness at having at last found a place of rest. Here it was that he spent his time preparing his work for the schools and the tasks set him by a good Priest, who was kindly helping him in his uphill work. Prayer and study took up most of his time, for his meals were short, and, we need hardly say, of the coarsest of coarse fares ; whilst his recreation was spent in the company of Father Bianchi, who had prepared him for his First Communion, and who was still his director. When this good Priest went out for his daily evening walk after school-time, he usually contrived to fall in with Benvenuto, with whom he continued on his way, talking of God and heavenly things. It is impossible to tell what delight Benvenuto derived from this inter-

course, which shaped the course of his soul after godly principles. As he grew wiser in knowledge, so grew the love of God within him, fostered by Father Bianchi, who each day unfolded some grand subject before his mind, knowing full well that the seed he was sowing would fall on rich, yielding soil. Thus, speaking on the subject of his vocation, he entered into its nature and fanned the youth's ardour, telling him, at the same time, that it was a subject requiring deep and mature reflection; that prayer was most essential in order to call down light from God; and that advice should also be sought of good and experienced persons on this all-important subject. Benvenuto often drew the conversation on these points, speaking of the ever-increasing impulse which, as it were, drove him towards the cloister, of the prayers which he continually offered to God, of his greater and greater longing to join the religious life, so as to give himself up wholly to the service of God. He also spoke of the opinions of many excellent Priests, approving his choice; whence Father Bianchi, after carefully sifting the facts of the case, recognised that God willed Benvenuto to enter into Religion, but at the same time left him free as to which Order he should select. These words of Father Bianchi's filled the young man's heart with delight, for they confirmed his brightest hopes. At harvest-time of that year, when his neighbours called in his help, they found him beyond himself with joy, singing light-heartedly, and reaping in such an absent-minded way, that he one day cut his hand, and he wore the scar all through his life. Thus full to overflowing was the gladness which possessed his soul—at twenty years of age!

We cannot pass over in silence the great love which,

throughout his whole life, Benvenuto bore towards his good and esteemed confessor, whose memory he ever held dear at heart. How could it be otherwise ? It was from Father Bianchi that he acquired that love of virginal chastity, that discipline of his innocent body in sackcloth and penance, in reward for which that exemplary Priest, in his struggle 'twixt life and death, was gladdened by the Mother of God ; for he died, saying to the by-standers : " Kneel down, my friends ; our heavenly Mother is here, and calls me to Herself."

In the year 1852, a young man came to Osimo for his studies, whom Father Bambozzi greeted most affectionately as the nephew of his dear friend Don Emidio Bianchi, long since dead, but never forgotten. On hearing that the young student bore his uncle's Christian name, he said : " How dear to me is the memory of that name : become as good as your uncle, for he was a Saint." Every time he chanced to meet the lad he went up to him and spoke a few words of friendly welcome, as it were, to pay his debt of gratitude.

But some may ask : if the fervour of that soul was so great, if the bent of his heart for religious life was so decided, if he panted so eagerly for austerity and penance, why did he choose the institute of the Minor Conventuals, which is reputed less strict than any o'er her ? We have no certain clue to this problem, as most of the friends of his younger days are now no more, and those still living have taxed their memory to help us, but in vain. The most likely conjecture is the following : Osimo, the native place of this saintly youth, is the proud owner of the relics of the ecstatic S. Joseph of Cupertino, in whose honour has been built a magnificent church, raised to the honours of a

Basilica by Pope Pius VI., of happy memory. Contiguous to the sacred edifice stands the Convent of the Black Friars of S. Francis, which was closed at the suppression in 1808, and re-opened in 1824 by a fresh community. It was the friars' duty to officiate in the Basilica, and to celebrate all the functions of the Church with becoming solemnity. Each day the Holy Sacrifice was offered up at hours most convenient for the people; many of the Fathers heard confessions; and others held professors' chairs in the Seminary and Upper College of Osimo.* Theirs was a truly religious brotherhood, springing into new life after the furious storm against God's Church which raged from 1789 till 1815, and which again, after a short interval, broke out more violently than ever. In spite of all, the community had freshened into life again, just as if it had never felt the withering blast of a suppression. What wonder then that young Benvenuto, whose heart was so free from guile, and so sensible to the inspirations of grace, should, in assisting at the sacred functions in the Basilica, have felt a wish to be one amongst men who seemed so intent on God's service, and who claimed S. Joseph of Cupertino as a brother! We certainly believe that it was within the walls of S. Joseph's Basilica that he heard the Voice of God calling him more clearly than ever to become a Conventional friar; but it is still more certain that the tender devotion he had ever borne towards that Saint drew him to his Order. Indeed, Benvenuto's love of poverty, solitude, prayer, humility, and charity, seem to have been prompted by the example of that glorious

* These were the Reverend Fathers Nardi, Gasparri, and Pasucci, all three Doctors in Divinity.

Hero, of whom, in after-life, he always spoke in growing terms of loving praise both to his pupils and strangers alike.

Having now made his choice, he went to his spiritual director, and laid open his heart to him and asked how he could at once fulfil his desire. Great, in truth, must have been his sorrow, on hearing that he was neither sufficiently well read in Latin, nor sufficiently proved in virtue to enter the Order chosen by him. But Benvenuto was not to be daunted by grief. His mind was made up, and he consequently set unflinchingly to work, bracing his will to new efforts and depriving himself of even necessary sleep, to forward his studies; at the same time watching more closely over himself so as to overcome his every failing, and reap a greater meed of virtue. So thoroughly was his mind bent on all this, and his soul given to God, that he became heedless of all manner of unkindness, rudeness and insult shown him by his schoolfellows. Being somewhat slow of intellect and simple by nature, the boys used often to prompt him in his lessons purposely wrong, and then break out laughing at his expense; but on no occasion was he known to lose his temper. They played off numberless jokes on him—some of them not over well-meant—yet he never showed resentment, nor lost his evenness of temper.

We cannot wonder that the town scholars, seeing a country lad dressed in the gear of those days, in short tight breeches, in an outgrown smock-frock, and a countryman's cap of mottled wool from which hung a tassel continually dangling from shoulder to shoulder; with books under his arm, and one or two pieces of brown bread peering out of his pockets: we cannot

really wonder at their making fun of him. What is truly wonderful is that the poor boy, who was the butt of all this raillery, should never have uttered a word of resentment, and always kept as peaceful and calm as if these banterings had not been meant for him at all. We cannot attribute this to bluntness of wit, since it is a well-known fact, that in the less gifted, sheer animal passion often holds the mastery over the intellectual parts, making such persons prone to anger and eager for revenge. Many who make a show of insensibility, avenge the sting of insult by a much deeper blow. We are ourselves led to think that Benvenuto's silence, his even-mindedness and peaceful conduct under such trying treatment from youths of his own age, either show that the virtue of patience, long since engrafted in his soul, was now reaching the fulness of perfection, or again, that his mind, heart, and soul were filled with the great thought of becoming a Saint. This was, indeed, his special aim, and towards this were directed all his struggles throughout life—all the ambition of his youth. We, who have known him and had constant dealings with him for many years, do not hesitate to vouch for the truth of this, as we have had abundant occasion to probe his virtue and to draw conclusions from many little incidents, which he pleasantly used to tell us, his brethren, during recreation-time.

We have been careful to avoid all possibility of exaggeration in this our narrative, by registering each fact as it has come to our own knowledge from the direct and trustworthy evidence of those who knew him personally.

In closing this chapter, we gladly lay before our

readers certain of his own sayings, which prove the great gratitude and thankfulness he felt towards God for calling him to the religious state, and how highly he valued this signal favour of the Most High. In his capacity of Novice Master—and even in general conversation—he has often been heard to express himself thus : “God could have chosen for Himself the best talented and richest persons in the whole world, and yet he has fixed His eye on us, who are poor, ignorant, wretched beings, and what is still worse—sinners.” “We shall never properly understand here on earth (and only in Paradise shall we know) how great is the gift of a religious calling.” “O my children, if we were ever to lie prostrate on our foreheads, in thanksgiving to God for the gift of a religious calling, we should even then never be able to thank Him adequately for it.” “God in calling us to religion has placed Paradise in our hands.” “Had we lived as long as the patriarchs of old, and ever in the practice of the highest virtues, we could never have deserved the grace of a vocation.” “After the grace of being born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, the most special grace of God is to be called to Religion.”

In order frequently to call to mind this great favour of the Almighty, and to rouse himself up so as to respond to it, he was often wont to ask himself after the example of S. Bernard : “Benvenuto, ad quid venisti?” “Benvenuto, to what end hast thou come hither?” And so great was the benefit which he derived from this practice, that his spirit of self-denial went on increasing, and urged him to the exercise of all the virtues befitting a Religious.

CHAPTER IV.

HE IS RECEIVED AMONGST THE MINOR CONVENTUALS.—
HIS NOVICESHIP.

THE Director of the Novices of the Minor Conventuals in Osimo, at this time, was Father Louis Capitanelli, a man as conspicuous for his rare virtues and spiritual endowments as for his exact observance of the Rule. All the Religious who passed their time of probation under him, and those amongst the inhabitants of Osimo who had the good fortune to know him, bear witness to his kindness and charity, which were ever generously and wisely bestowed. To this favoured soul Father Bianchi directed Benvenuto as soon as he thought him able to undergo the required examination in Latin, and sufficiently advanced on the road of virtue.

Benvenuto took a ready liking to this good father; and used daily to come to him to talk about God and receive instructions on the subject of the religious life. One fine day, Father Capitanelli introduced him to his novices, who on seeing his ridiculous dress, and uncomely bearing, did not laugh outright, it is true, because their religious training and the presence of their Director held them in check; but they certainly formed no very favourable judgment from first impressions.

Father Capitanelli, after telling them that the young man would be amongst them soon, took leave of Benvenuto. No sooner had he left the Noviciate than the Director reproved his disciples in these words: “My

dear children, you did not show an over-pleasing countenance just now to that young man, perhaps because he was clad in a countryman's gear, and could lay no claim to outward beauty ; but know, that under those coarse and rustic garments there is hidden a soul that is beautiful—aye, very beautiful.” And ever fairer did Benvenuto strive to render it ; for, as in his first youth he had no other guide but the Saints whose lives he had read, so now he beheld in this perfect Religious a bright example of Christian virtue ; nor would he ever have left his side had not his studies and other duties called him away.

The hour at length came when Benvenuto was enabled to gratify his wish. He was told that in the neighbouring town of Loreto a Provincial Chapter was being held, and that as the Father Provincial was coming to Osimo, on a Visitation, he should hold himself in readiness for the examination required before admission into the Order. On this his heart leaped with delight, and a sweet smile overspread his features. His eyes, generally downcast, now looked up to Father Capitanelli, who, in their sweet expression beheld the joy of the young man’s soul, which seemed to radiate from them.

Benvenuto hastened to church to thank God and beg help to pass a good examination ; for the little faith he had in his own powers foreshadowed almost certain failure. Having placed his trust in God he went back to his studies with renewed earnestness, and his life was now all prayer and work. The day of his examination came, and he was duly approved of by the Provincial, Father Francis Bartolini, D.D., of distinguished memory. Thus was Benvenuto, at twenty-

two years of age, received into the Order ; and as he was getting on in years, it was decided to make him at once begin his novitiate.

On hearing this, he hastened home, all-joyful and happy at having gained the end he so eagerly longed for, and begged his mother to get his outfit ready as soon as possible. Oh, how long those days seemed to him between his admission into the Order and his religious clothing ! This event took place on the 3rd of December, 1832, at the hands of the late Father Francis Ventura. Throughout the day he never ceased thanking God for so signal a favour, and that very evening the Guardian handed him over to Father Capitanelli to prove him, in the usual way, during his year of trial.

Benvenuto had now attained his highest wish, having, as he used to say in later life, entered his earthly paradise. Nor did it cost him any great effort to master his passions, as he had begun that struggle from the first dawn of youth. His great delight was in learning to say the Divine Office in performing the sacred functions of clerks in Holy Orders, and studying the holy Rule, which was to guide him through life. All these things he used to call *great*, as belonging to the service of God ; and he could not hide his joy when the Director spoke to the novices, or to himself in private, about the particular virtues a Religious should practise, who aims at perfection. Nor did he think it enough to listen and admire : he looked to deeds, and strove to shape his own conduct according to what he was taught. His soul was steeped in a sea of bliss, and he heeded naught but God alone.

The year of noviceship is one of trial, which Religion

makes of the aspirant, and the aspirant of Religion. No other study is allowed in that twelvemonth but the Constitutions proper to the Order, and matters directly connected with the service of God. Nothing is allowed to unsettle the mind ; all is peaceful and quiet for the soul that wishes to give itself unreservedly to God. Oh, this is, indeed, the happiest year of one's life, throughout which God's grace and light abound whilst He draweth the soul nearer to Himself and fills it with unspeakable bliss. And if this be the lot of every good novice, what must it not have been for one who was so well disposed, and had never known the world nor its vanities ! Benvenuto's days glided on peacefully, ever full of good works. In choir, at meditation, in chanting, he was always most exact ; he showed exceeding devotion in assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, in visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament, for which he burned with such great love, that he was motionless as a statue when either kneeling in choir or watching beside the altar. He, moreover, kept the strictest silence, and made golden use of every moment of time.

Six months of his noviciate had already gone by when he bethought himself of jotting down (after obtaining leave) the following holy resolutions, gathered from the words and example of his Director and the other Fathers, which served him to good purpose in after-life.

We hope both to please and benefit our readers by laying before them these notes as we find them written in a small book, to which he had prefixed the title of :

“REFLECTIONS.”

“Having found a supreme good, which is holy Religion, and being now in my noviciate, I have set down these my resolutions, that, reading them often, I may know whether I go forward or backward in the service of God; and that, above all, I may restore my soul to health if I find that I am faltering in any respect.

“Here, prostrate in the presence of my Angel-Guardian, of my patron Saint and holy advocates, invoking with all my heart the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and the all-powerful help of the Most Holy Trinity, I will endeavour not only to write these resolutions as if they were dictated from Heaven, but also to practise them in each moment of my life, so as to strive after holy perfection with ever-increasing ardor.

“ARTICLE I.*“On the Excellence of a Religious Calling.*

“1. I will often call to mind that, after the grace which God has given me of being born in the bosom of our Holy Mother the Church, the most signal is that of having called me to holy Religion.

“2. I will always remember that my aim is to become holy, and that all good people in the world, and all the Blessed in Heaven, wish me to be so.

“3. To attain this end, I will ever follow the example of the few, and especially of the Saints, bearing in mind that if I go the way of the lax, I shall find no excuse before God’s Judgment Seat. I now, therefore, make up my mind to do my bounden duty,

regardless of others; even at the cost of being despised and held to be a fool.

“4. Knowing that the first steps which lead to perfection are holy desires, I will endeavour to foster many such; and when my strength seems to fail me, I will not grow troubled, but will beseech Our Blessed Lord and dear Lady to give me all needful help. Again, when I find myself looking forward to great and future things, I will place these matters in the Hands of Providence and, meanwhile, take care to do well such small things as are within my reach.

“5. I will always live in the holy fear of God, striving to shun every deliberate act of even venial sin, and fulfilling my duties to the best of my power, I will look upon God in the light of my most loving Father and my All. If, haplessly, I should ever cool down to lukewarmness, and make small reckoning of venial faults; or, worse again, should I ever slumber in sin, then shall I look on God as an Awful Judge ready to wreak His vengeance on me unless I rouse myself to mourn over my sin, and love Him with my whole soul.

“6. I will often call to mind that, being a Religious, I am a victim burning on the Altar of Jesus Christ: I will bear my cross, whatever it be, and follow in His footsteps without complaint, knowing that whatever befalls me, either from the world, the flesh, or the devil—great as the evil may seem—still is permitted by God for my good. Hence I must bear with all in silence, and make myself one with the Divine Will.

“ARTICLE II.

“*On Humility.*

“1. I will always bear in mind that I am a poor worthless wretch; that I have abused graces and talents given me by God in producing no end of wickedness.

“2. I will ever look on God as the Great All with whom I would fain be blended as a drop of water in a boundless sea, bearing in mind that the more worthless I am in my own sight, so much the more can I do with Heaven’s help. When I bethink myself to be something, then shall I know that I am indeed a self-deceiver; and from this day forth I wish to stamp on my heart that I am the most wretched of all mankind, and that I am a deceiver of self if I set myself above a single being. If, however, I find that I cannot look upon myself as the greatest of all sinners (as did the Saints), I shall acknowledge this as the greatest of all my miseries.

“3. In order to keep on steadfastly in the way of virtue, I will bring my mind to love and court the most humble offices and objects spurned by all; I will be glad that my capacities be overlooked, and that, for doing good, I may meet with the scorn of men. Were I even the means of converting the whole world, I still will deem myself a useless servant.

“4. I will bear in mind that correction is the greatest good which can befall me in this world: I will show myself eager for correction even in the smallest things; and should I not think myself at fault, I will hold that this may very well arise from my deceitful pride, and

will at least humble myself before God for so many other sins of which I am guilty in His sight. If, haplessly, I should feel dislike towards correction, I shall then know that I am going from bad to worse.

"5. Whatever good I may do in life, I will give myself no credit for it, because the act may have been blemished in a thousand ways. Besides, whatever good I may do depends altogether on the grace of God; whence I ought to feel nought but confusion, thinking how much better it might have been done. I will keep my mind on those things which, at the hour of death, I shall wish to have done.

"6. I next stamp indelibly on my heart the legacy bequeathed me by our Novice-Master, viz.: that I must imitate the few, deny myself in every way, bear with all that God wishes, and conform myself more and more to His Divine Will.

"7. I will never take pleasure in being thought learned or fitted for anything, nor will I ever seek office or dignities. On the other hand, I will not, out of mere dread of vain glory, hold aloof from good works, study, prayer, and confession, but will, if needs be, openly maintain that I am bound to be a good Religious.

"8. I will, above all, bear in mind that I must deny my inward self, and hence shall I daily rejoice, even to my life's end, when my wishes are thwarted in any way. I will be as strict as I can with regard to myself; I will judge myself to have done well only when my own will has been frustrated; and I will strive to do all things with a view of pleasing God and not myself. In a word, I will call to mind that I profit only inasmuch as I deny myself.

“ARTICLE III.*“On Charity.*

“1. I wish to have Charity for all, however wicked any particular individual may seem to be, since it is my bounden duty to look on everybody as God’s creatures. I shall, however, bear special love towards my brethren, and strive to act in their regard as I should towards a loving mother, as says the Rule. I will likewise act with all possible kindness towards the aged and sick and those whose natural disposition crosses mine.

“2. Should I ever see anything evil, especially amongst my brethren, I will, if expedient, correct them charitably at a fitting time; otherwise, after taking advice, I shall have recourse to the Superior, actuated only by charitable motives.

“3. Should the Almighty ever give me grace to preach, I wish to do so in a way that shall have for its first object the good of the poor and ignorant masses of the people, and I will avoid all studied oratory, and greed of praise. If I am not called upon to preach from the pulpit, I will nevertheless strive to preach at every moment of my life by force of good example—by often speaking of God, of the Eternal Truths, of the claims which Jesus has on our love—by showing up the world that all may see its treachery, and above all, by praying, as I have set my mind on doing, every moment of my life, so as to put an end to sin and draw the world to salvation. I will, above all, pray with fervour for the Ministers of the Church, that the world may be renewed by the holiness of their lives. Hence will I

ever weep for their sins, which, more than all, pierce through Our Redeemer's Heart.

"4. If I go on some rare occasions—either from motives of charity or piety—to see my parents, I will stay but a short while with them, speaking of things profitable to their souls, giving them good example in all I do, and neither wishing for dainty food, nor courting visits and amusements. When away from them, I will write to them but seldom, and from dutiful motives only, according to the true spirit of my religious state; as it is much better for them and for me to be wholly severed from one another. I will make them sundry gifts, but will stamp on my heart that overweening love for one's parents, in a Religious, is highly displeasing to God.

"ARTICLE IV.

"On the Choice of a Good Director.

"1. I will seek out a good Director and open my heart freely to him, letting him know, above all, the source of all my leanings, both evil and good, as also my desires; my noteworthy temptations or scruples, in case I have any; or, if need be, the vice of an over-lax conscience. I will also mention what way I am making in spiritual life; what prayers, both vocal and mental, I am daily using, and what fruits they bear. I will mention the noteworthy acts of penance and self-denial which I am practising, and whether or not I take a fancy to them. I will give an account of my speech, my solitary moments, how I spend my time: in a word, I will make all things known to him. At least once a year I will lay before him the workings of

my soul during the twelvemonth gone by, that he may see from the knowledge I give him of my past life whether I am going forward or backward in the path Our Saviour trod.

“2. I will strive to be as open-hearted as I can with all my Superiors, whom the Almighty endows with special light for the guidance of those under them. I will keep impressed in my heart, that all good must come from wisely taking counsel.

“ARTICLE V.

“*On the Renewal of Vows.*

“1. I will often renew my vows, especially those in regard to which I may feel any temptation, bearing in mind that my vows are the wings with which I must rise to holiness.

“2. As the vows are essential to my state, I will take Obedience as my motto; hence, wherever I do not see the pitfall of sin gaping openly before me, I will do whatever I am told without answering a word; and will, whenever I can, anticipate my Superior’s bidding. If haplessly I should seek to stay in any convent, office, or occupation, or to have anything else to my liking, then must I call to mind that I am no longer acting as a Franciscan, but that I am seeking mansions in this world.

“3. Furthermore, in order that my every act may acquire the merit of obedience, I shall bow to my Director’s behest as only second to my Superior’s even in the most trivial things. In a word, I will ever bear in mind that it is not what I do that will

make me holy, but that strict obedience alone can do so.

“4. I will often recall to mind that in entering a religious life I left my own will in the world, as also the right of willing, and I will delight that any reasons I may urge to get my own way should be spurned ; nor will I ever take my own part, unless charity towards my neighbour or the welfare of others shall call upon me so to do. In such cases I will give my reasons in holy simplicity, and be equally pleased whether I be heeded or not. I will never say : ‘That is your business ;’ ‘This is not my business ;’ but will delight to be the servant of all, and to do all that others may leave undone. Should I ever act otherwise, I shall have reason to fear that the Spirit of God is forsaking me, and that I am in the way of becoming a Religious in name only.

“5. Chastity maketh us like unto the Angels, it raiseth us to the knowledge of heavenly things, and welds us closely to Jesus Christ, the Spouse of souls. This, then, will I make my chosen virtue, and observe it as closely as I can, carefully repressing all the promptings of the flesh, holding aloof from conversations tainted with even the slightest impropriety, from romance-reading or any other cause which may lead us unwittingly to the opposite vice. Lust is a hidden fire, whose smouldering embers are ever ready to break out. Hence, I take Mary, my mother, as my support; Joseph, Her Spouse, for my witness; my Angel-Guardian for my guide; and, above all, Jesus as the beloved One of my heart, whom I must learn to contemplate in the sufferings to which His love for me has reduced Him. Chastity is the chariot which is to take me to Jesus.

“ 6. I will never seek soft or fanciful clothing, but will at all times chastise my body, and hold the strictest watch over my eyes.

“ 7. I will accept the bed which Religion gives me, without complaint, rejoicing even should it be the very worst of all ; and when I have not much to do, I will make it myself.

“ 8. I will bear in mind that I must be watchful over my eyes, not only as a novice, but even to my dying day ; hence I shall close them to objects of curiosity and distraction, denying them even lawful, though needless, gratification, so that I may the more easily check them in clearly forbidden cases.

“ 9. I will mortify my sense of smell ; I will delight to put up with any inconvenience in this respect, especially when tending the sick, the aged, the poor, or doing any other distasteful task set before me. I will remember that it is highly blameworthy in a Religious to care for choice scents ; and to be mortified at any others.

“ 10. Since necessity compels me to take food, I will direct this act to God, begging His grace, so that it may not lead me to sin ; and when I can, I will kiss the ground; call to mind the doings of the Saints; and think of what so many beggars have to endure, who have nothing to call their own. I will say grace devoutly, and will pay as much heed as I can to the reading in the refectory, with a view of keeping strict silence. I will deny myself in some way, however slight, with regard to my food at every meal, and be pleased with all that is set before me, refraining from choosing my pittance in any way. I wish to be very sparing in the use of wine, and, between meals, I will drink nothing

but water, unless compelled by necessity. If beyond these I may feel urged to practise some other noteworthy mortification, I will ask my Director's leave, and having obtained it, I will hand over all that I can spare to those holding office in the convent, that it may be doled out to the poor according to the Superior's pleasure. I will call to mind that I have entered a religious life to do penance; hence will I daily deny my senses, bearing with resignation both heat and cold, bodily ailment or any other discomfort. I will also seek some little mortification when either sitting, standing, or sleeping. On such days as the discipline is not taken by the whole community, I will take it privately, according as I may be allowed. In remembrance of the wounded Heart of my Redeemer I will wear about me either some chain or sharp instrument, or a heart with iron points, which I will press at times, especially when I feel tempted or moved to impatience, though always under my Director's advice.

“12. I will look upon this world as a place in which we tarry but a few moments to gather as many riches as we have a mind to enjoy everlasting in the next. Hence do I wish to free myself from all earthly trammels, and soar upwards to the sweet bliss of Heaven.

“13. In order to keep the Franciscan rule of poverty, I shall look on all things which I use as given me in charity; I will gladly wear the coarsest of clothing, calling to mind that all about me should be poor, and I will follow the example set by the more judicious friars, and not the bent of youth. With my underclothing I will be sparing, using such only as is absolutely needed, and delight that all my things

be excessively plain, so that when dying I may look back to this with joy. With regard to books, I will not look to exquisite bindings, but rest content with a good choice of moral and ascetic works, lives of Saints, and like books, which I will gladly lend to others in order that they may learn to love God.

“14. As regards the use of money, I will keep scrupulously to the rule, as laid down in our Constitutions; and if the Superior thinks fit that I should keep a little money by me for small expenses, I will do my best to spend it only on necessary things and the poor.

“15. And here I may add that as our nature, in the use of commodities and money, never says ‘enough,’ therefore will I try to forego even what is necessary; and frequently examine my conscience on this score, with death before my eyes. The opinion of our Novice-Master is that many Religious are damned through not observing poverty.

“16. Should obedience impose on me any office in the community, modesty and religious poverty shall be my guides, and I will refrain from the slightest injustice. I shall be pleased to see the convent giving alms; and will, to this end, gladly give up something which would otherwise have fallen to my lot.

“17. I will never take part in any game of hazard, and will look upon using money for this purpose as venomous. I will join in others games, so as not to wear the look of affectation, but will not care whether my partner be clever or dull, whether I lose or win, bearing in mind that a Religious is a man wholly given to God; that he should not be swayed by such trifles, but be self-denying in everything.

"ARTICLE VI.*"On Devotion.*

"1. I will always seek after solid devotion, which I know does not consist in sweet, soothing and pleasant feelings, but in being ready to serve God with unflagging zeal in the midst of troubles. I will certainly look on peace of mind and devotion—whilst they last—as of very great use, but at the same time remember that God calls also upon us to work, to be energetic, to shun evil and practise all holy virtues. I will bear in mind that God gives many graces, and freely communicates Himself to those generous souls who keep steadfast in His service, in spite of spiritual dryness, hardships and troubles.

"2. I will take care never to laugh at devotion, nor at those who practise it; nor will I join such as speak slightly of it. Even should I meet with sham-devotees, I will not spurn them for it; but on the contrary pray for them and teach them; when I can, so that they may become really good.

"3. I will also make the most of all the solemnities and mysteries which the Church bids us celebrate, as also the feasts of Our Blessed Lady: I will strive to prepare for them as well as I can, by means of prayer, by some virtuous practices, by correcting my many failings, and striving after the virtues of those Saints whose feasts we are keeping.

"4. I will often meditate on the Way of the Cross, and will daily visit the Most Blessed Sacrament: I will often ponder on the Passion of Our Saviour, and gaze upon His wounded Heart, in which I would fain for

ever dwell—to think unceasingly on the price which my own and my neighbours' souls have cost. I will often call to mind the sorrows of the Most Blessed Virgin, my sweet Mother, and will hold, without fail, that the more I dwell on such thoughts in times either of peace or temptation, the more holy shall I become.

“5. I will do my best to gain as many Indulgences as I can, and apply them in suffrage for the holy souls; on whose behalf, moreover, I purpose offering all the good I may do, all the evil I may suffer.

“6. The more my courage may seem to give way in the service of God, the more shall I, in all meekness, fly from sin, deny myself, and practise virtue. Even were my eternal salvation to seem beyond hope, I would try to give myself untiringly to good works, instead of being cast down—mindful that he who trusts stoutly shall not perish everlastingily.

“7. I will bear a great love to the Mother of God, to my Angel-Guardian, to the Saints of our Order, to S. Joseph, Mary’s Spouse, to the Prince of the Apostles, to my Patron, and to all the Saints of Heaven, who one and all wish to see me holy.

“8. I will have the highest faith possible concerning the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, at which I will assist as often as I can. Should Almighty God raise me to the Priesthood (of which I own myself most unworthy, nor will I ever dare look forward to it), I will celebrate the Holy Sacrifice with the greatest devotion, modesty, composure, and will have a horror of chatting, looking about, or any other unseemly behaviour, whilst either putting on or taking off the holy vestments. I purpose attending to my remote preparation for it by severing myself from the world; by fostering

devotion and union with God Almighty ; whilst I will daily close my immediate preparation by rousing myself to a greater and greater hatred of sin, offering myself wholly to God, and living as a perfect holocaust to His most loving Heart. I will, in particular, beseech the Blessed Virgin to make good my unworthiness. After Mass, I propose making half an hour's thanksgiving ; but shall shorten this a little when either obedience or charity towards my neighbour, or the service of the Church calls me away ; and then I will put it off to some other time.

“ 9. I will make a practice of examining my conscience on some particular fault which I must strive to uproot, and of looking to the way in which I say the Office and my other devotions. Hence will I beg forgiveness of all the faults that I see in myself, making up my mind to mend my life and setting about it at once.

“ 10. I will confess once or twice during the week, and even oftener if expedient ; I will make the yearly special confession, and, if I happen to have held some noteworthy office, it shall be a general one. Lastly, in making my preparation my aim shall be to dispose myself worthily, without worrying myself or being over solicitous, but placing full reliance in the grace of God. Having acknowledged my sins with humility at the Sacred Tribunal, and having received absolution and penance, I will thank God, ever Blessed, with all my heart, and seek to do penance.

“ 11. In order not to give way to distracting thoughts whilst saying the Divine Office, or any other devotional exercise, I will strive to live dead to the world, in utter forgetfulness of self, and wholly bent on

thinking of God. If, in spite of the care which I purpose taking, I be still tempted with distractions, wandering thoughts, and the like, I will, without heeding them, meekly call back to mind the act which I am performing ; and should fresh temptations arise, I will humble myself before God and spurn my foolish fancy. Should this remedy prove ineffectual I will make a thousand acts of resignation for such weaknesses, and beg forgiveness inasmuch as I may have been at fault.

" 12. I will read some spiritual book daily, and some point of the Rule once every week. Henceforth Moral Theology and the direction of souls shall be my earnest studies. When it shall have pleased God to fit me for hearing confessions, I will do so with charity and zeal ; I will bear in mind that it behoves me to have, as it were, unbounded patience in the confessional, and I will delight to forego my sleep and put up with any hardship in order to hear confessions at whatever time and in whatever circumstances I may be called upon to do so. I will likewise joyfully wait upon the dying, even if this should cost me my life. If men lose their souls to purchase the things of this earth, shall I not do my utmost to save the souls redeemed by the Blood of my Lord ? Shall I not labour to qualify myself for this, and put up with any hardship to fit myself for such holy work ?

" 13. The one means to enable me to carry out my resolutions is prayer ; hence will I pray always, or at least beg Our Lord to give me the spirit of prayer. With regard to vocal prayers, I will rather say a few well, than many ill ; and I will increase their number when I find myself less apt for mental prayer.

Otherwise I will lessen these vocal prayers ; but not to go wrong, I will act according to my Director's advice. The greatest need I have is to meditate on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ ; on the sorrows of His Mother, who is also Our Mother ; on the Eternal maxims ; and other subjects, which may seem most to my advantage. I will not fail, especially in spare moments, to make holy ejaculations, in order to ward off temptations and unite myself to God. As the fruit of each prayer I will aim at acquiring a deeper and deeper knowledge of my own nothingness, of the most wretched way in which I respond to the calls of grace and strive to show unbounded trust and love towards God. In fine, I will fill my mind with thoughts of the grandeur of Heaven, bearing in mind that, though my worthlessness calls for a thousand chastisements, still I must not lose heart ; but seek forgiveness, fly from sin, be longsuffering in adversity, cherish all virtues, and especially that of self-denial.

" 14. I will strive to make way in these virtues, by meditating on the presence of God, and remember that I am immersed in Him as a drop of water cast into the sea. Should this means fail, I will, at least, strive to do all things as if I saw God actually before me.

"ARTICLE VII.

"On Regular Discipline.

" 1. I will always hold regular discipline and religious observance dear at heart, and never wish for exemptions or dispensations, but, on the contrary,

always prove willing to keep the Rule and Constitution.

“2. I will bear in mind, that all conversations should be seasoned with holy and modest reserve, and never verge on the brink of even venial sin. Should I ever take a liking to conversations other than these, I shall know that I am looking back—cleaving to the earth, and flying from my destined end.

“3. True friendship is single—that is with God alone: hence will I keep myself from all foolish acquaintances, and friendships of mere inclination. All these I will sacrifice to God, in order to be happy in our heavenly Fatherland. I will remember that for every affection denied to creatures I shall receive a hundred-fold reward from God in this life and everlasting glory in the next. Nevertheless I will be a friend to all, according to the Gospel, doing good as far as I am able, to those towards whom I feel an antipathy, and to those who wish me ill. I will be merciful to the poor, and thankful to those who do me good. I will also conform to all those acts of politeness and courtesy which beseeem a modest Religious, but will abhor vain speeches: in a word, I will deal with men only out of necessity or charity, so as to have more time to spend with God. I will scrupulously avoid giving scandal or occasion for sin in myself or others.

“4. I will openly make known my aversion for gifts or presents: I will ever hate patronage and praises; and will have nothing to do with news-gathering, complimentary letters, and such like follies—shoals on which even the wary often run aground.

“5. I know that silence is the soul of the religious

life; hence I will love it as much as I possibly can : I will speak but little, and will keep clear of all worldly, equivocal, or sprightly terms.

“ 6. I will shun idleness, the parent of all vices, and will spend the best of my time in prayer, study, and the exact fulfilment of whatever office may be placed in my charge. As soon as recreation-time is over I will at once withdraw into my own cell to collect my thoughts and attend to my little concerns as devoutly as I can. Time is as precious as God Himself ! When wearied by study, I will turn my mind to some lighter work ; such as going to church, contemplating the Crucifix, a devotional picture, or in doing such handiwork as beseems a Religious—provided always that my ordinary duties be already performed.

“ 7. I will so love the religious habit, that I will never show myself, nor receive any one into my room, without having it on.

“ 8. I will remember that I never can be a good Religious without inward and outward mortification, retirement and prayer ; hence I must shun the example of those who live without care in these matters, and shift like weathercocks.

“ 9. As a rule, I will take my daily walk in the evening, except on days of great popular gathering. I will do my best to avoid the most frequented walks, and will rejoice to have one of my brethren or some piously-minded Priest for my companion. I will, if I can, visit some church, or sick person, especially when poor and forsaken, before returning to the Convent shortly before sunset.

“ 10. I will not spend time in sport, nor keep birds in my room ; but bear in mind that I must be a

hunter of souls, and that, instead of thinking about birds, I must think of the little ones of Jesus Christ.

“ 11. Unless compelled by necessity, I will remember that it is a great dissipation, and contrary to my state, to go to feasts, fairs, and other public shows, although they be harmless in themselves.

“ 12. I will remember that it is bane for a Religious to go about seeing towns and attractions of this world under the plea of visiting sanctuaries and seeking knowledge ; that it is even worse for him to assist at noisy musical entertainments, social gatherings, dinners, and share in the delights of a country house with persons living in the world—unless the cause of God be at stake, and the pleasures harmless in themselves.

“ 13. I will bear in mind that the Carnival and other seasons of worldly rejoicing are, for a good Religious, times for weeping, prayer, retirement, and exhorting the faithful to refrain from such follies.

“ 14. I will find means to mortify my tongue every day, and will never interrupt becoming conversations, nor will I ever reproach any one with evil when they show sorrow for their wrongful act. I will never laugh at any one, save in harmless fun with those who take it well. I will strive to say what good I can of every one ; otherwise I will hold my tongue. I will not praise those in whom my words might give rise to vanity. I will ever speak well of the Church, of Prelates, and of religious Orders. I will prudently correct, or hold aloof altogether from grumblers ; and if I can neither shun their company nor correct their faults, I will at least show by my forbidding countenance that I have no part with them.

“ 15. Whatever strife or dispute I may fall into, I will, before speaking and deciding, wait till my temper be calm, and, above all, I will take no step without my Superior’s knowledge, even should my good name run the risk of being ruined.

“ 16. Knowing, as I do, that peace is the essence of holiness in the soul, I will always prove meek and courteous towards all, especially towards Religious, even should there be any amongst them bearing me a grudge. I will strive to please every one, as far as I can without sinning ; and in order to prevent evil, I will sacrifice something of my worldly interests for the good of souls.

“ 17. I will take care not to meddle in worldly affairs unless prompted by motives of charity, justice, obedience, or some other virtue proper to my state.

“ 18. I will never follow the example of those busy-bodies who are all show, and either do nothing at all, or else get mixed up with things unbecoming their condition. I wish rather to do much for the first comer, whoever he be ; and when I cannot help my neighbour, or when it does not come under my province to do so, I will frankly tell him so, taking care, above all, to avoid quibbling.

“ 19. I will shun melancholy as much as I can, knowing that true joy is found in a peaceful heart, in a holy life, in collected thoughts, in cheerful friendliness tempered by modest religious reserve. I do not certainly wish to be numbered with such as live amidst a thousand vanities, and still think that they are journeying on to perfection. I wish, in fact, to imitate the joy of the Saints, and not that of fools, which alone can lead astray from the paths of God.”

Whoever has known Father Bambozzi personally, will own that throughout life he never swerved from these resolutions; and we (who have had the good fortune of living with him for thirty-one years) can say that in their strict observance he raised himself to the highest degree of perfection.

CHAPTER V.

END OF BENVENUTO'S NOVICESHIP.—HIS SOLEMN PROFESSION.

THE most noble and the grandest sacrifice which man can offer to his Maker is the act of profession in some religious institute approved by the Church; since with the vows of Obedience, Chastity, and Poverty, he immolates to God all that is to him most precious and dear.

What has man, here below, more glorious than his will and freedom: what more attractive, and bewitching, than riches and pleasures? But he, who wishes to be wholly God's, should withhold and keep himself from all that can lead astray, beginning with the least promptings of his frail nature. "If any man will come after Me," saith the Lord, "let him deny himself, let him take up his cross and follow Me." The things which make us forsake God are the cravings of our passions, viz.: pride, concupiscence, and love of earthly things. These laid aside, our union with God is easily effected.

Words cannot tell how Brother Benvenuto, with his

mind full of such thoughts, strove to make himself ready for the great sacrifice. The mortifications by which the Novice-Master tested his virtue: the penances enjoined by the Constitutions, as well as those added by himself: the prayers which he increased every day: the slights which he had to bear from some, who, looking merely at the outward man, failed to discern the exceeding beauty of his soul: the resolutions which he made, as recorded in the foregoing chapter—all seemed but little in his sight, and he would fain have done more had it been allowed him. Willingly would he have rooted out of his mind all thoughts of the world; thrown off the old man more effectually and put on the new; followed more closely the ways of his Father S. Francis, of his Patron S. Joseph of Cupertino; likened himself to these great Saints in their penances, fasts, scourgings, and bodily discipline: but all his requests were not granted by the Master of Novices, who, on the contrary, used to humble him, saying that it was pride to think so much of self, and that he had better strive to be exact in his ordinary duties as a novice, in which, owing to his lack of talent, he often made mistakes. Whenever he happened to be thus corrected, he would meekly bow down his head and humble himself at the thought of his own nothingness.

The whole year of the novitiate, in the eyes of the Church, is but a continual preparation for the solemn profession of Vows. In the course of that year the neophyte has a right to know and to sift for himself all that concerns his Vows, and the observance of his Rule, so that he may give himself to God of his own free will. Were it otherwise, the Church would be

countenancing a gross and shameful act of deceit ; but all may rest assured—spite of the blasphemies uttered by the enemies of Religion—that the novice who goes to the Altar and vows his all to God, does so with full knowledge of what he is about, and acts in perfect freedom.

Our holy and loving mother the Church does not rest satisfied with the daily trial of a year's probation; but, in her exceeding prudence, orders the last ten days to be wholly spent in spiritual exercises, so that, by the light of eternal truth, and a careful weighing of his duties, the novice may make up his mind one way or the other.

It is indeed easy to picture in mind, though no easy task to tell in words, the inmost feelings of our young novice as the time of his solemn profession was drawing nigh. Urged, on the one hand, by the most ardent longing to bind himself inseparably with God, he was held back, on the other, by the knowledge of his own wretchedness : though the strength of his calling eventually surmounted every obstacle suggested by his humility. If, at times, the responsibilities he was about to assume seemed hard indeed for man to bear, he would take courage by trusting wholly in God's boundless goodness. "I wish to serve the Great God !" was the spell by which he triumphed when the Enemy of Mankind tried to balk him in his holy purpose.

Having been duly approved by the Order, he made his solemn Vows with heartfelt joy on the 9th of December, 1833, taking the names of Benvenuto Joseph. Oh ! what a happy day was that ! How he uplifted his mind and soul to God, whom he had

chosen for his inheritance, his wealth, his all ! Only he, who has felt the unspeakable bliss of giving himself wholly to his Maker, can understand the heavenly sweetness, the soothing peace, which, on that day of sacrifice, fills and enraptures the soul ! Could those who wickedly find a subject of scornful laughter in this sublime act, but cast one glance within those hearts, and scan those happy souls, they would surely envy their pure joy ; or at least withdraw from the sight in confusion and shame.

CHAPTER VI.

HE IS SENT TO THE CONVENT OF URBINO, WHERE HE IS ORDAINED PRIEST.

As the skilful gardener takes the young plant from the hot-house to some well-favoured spot, that it may draw sap from mother earth, and grow strong in free and open air, so act the Superiors in religious Orders.

Noviciates may well be likened to hot-houses, wherein fresh shoots—planted by the Master of the Vineyard—spring to the bloom of religious life. Once grown up, the Superiors transplant them to some other cloister, where, by means of careful training, under the care of tried persons, the novices may acquire the arts and sciences necessary for doing good in the Church of Jesus Christ, and to society at large, without at the same time losing the religious spirit gained in their noviciate.

Brother Benvenuto, having now undergone the

wonted trial, was ordered by the Provincial to set out for the Convent of Urbino, and prepare himself for Holy Orders. In obedience to this summons, he started at once, without even attempting to see his parents, whom he so dearly loved. Thus, after the example of the Apostles, he forsook father, mother, sisters, brothers, friends ; and started companionless towards Urbino. On reaching the convent, he presented himself to the Superior, who at once handed him over to the Prefect of Studies. The good Prefect, seeing that he was rather slow of understanding, and well advanced in years, began at once teaching him Moral Theology, to which study Benvenuto took very kindly, and worked untiringly. He also attended a few lectures on Dogmatic Theology with great earnestness ; but he was evidently more at home with Moral Theology, because it fitted him for the truly apostolic life to which he had ever aspired, viz. : to teach and evangelise the poor and unlettered, and to hear confessions.

Benvenuto's backwardness in his studies subjected him to a series of humiliations during his stay at Urbino, which would have disheartened any one else ; whereas he, on the contrary, thanked God for these crosses, looking on them as most efficacious remedies against the vice of vanity, which finds such congenial fuel in the heart of man. He felt acutely all the bitterness of his situation, but checked this feeling as soon as it rose, saying : " I am content to be humbled and despised, so that the power of Jesus Christ dwell within me ; O Lord, may I draw profit from these precious occasions of practising virtue ;" or, again, his favourite exclamation : " Viva

Maria!" hence these humiliations not only failed to thrust him back one step on his way to perfection, but urged him, on the contrary, to make more progress than ever in his studies. Nor was he ever heard to utter a word of ill-feeling or complaint against any of those who made jokes at his expense, though the slightest hint, given to the Superiors, would have put a stop to such ungenerous conduct.

Benvenuto made it a rule to show greater deference towards those who slighted him, to laugh with those who made fun of him, and never to seem vexed, but rather to be even-tempered and kind to all, after his own fashion. Meanwhile he worked with unflagging earnestness at his studies, proving cheerful, simple, and ever foremost in all the community exercises; whilst he fulfilled his religious duties with such exactitude, that in a short time he excited emulation in his fellow-students, and admiration in his Superiors, from whom such great virtues, however secretly practised, could not long be kept hidden.

They knew but too well how he deprived himself of sleep for prayer and study; they found out the numberless ways in which, day after day, he strove to mortify his palate; they witnessed his great willingness to serve his sick brethren, even in the most humiliating offices, and that even whilst thus engaged he was seldom seen without a useful book beside him. When chanting in choir he always kept the Breviary open; and in time of meditation and private prayer he knelt, with his eyes rooted to the ground. Nor could the Fathers help admiring the hearty goodwill with which he met the calls of obedience: indeed, he so readily complied with everything he was bid, that he out-

witted the devil by doing his duty, ere he could be tempted to rebel against it. His modesty was so great that it seemed well-nigh to border on the scrupulous; for when he had occasion to change his clothes, after a long walk in hot weather, he would close the window lattice, so that not a single streak of light should break into his room; and he at all times kept the strictest watch over his eyes, so as not to give the slightest cause for unholy temptations. With regard to his food he was very sparing, and thus facilitated the victory over his rising passions. All his brethren were impressed by his lowly demeanour in church. During the sacred functions, he maintained a gravity which, on account of his figure, wore the look of affection to those who did not know him inwardly; but which, in truth, revealed a deeply-grounded faith in the mysteries of God's holy religion. On the other hand, during recreation-time, he proved cheerful, open-hearted, and even witty to the point of keeping his companions merry, without ever offending against charity. In his room he had nothing save his Breviairy, a few school-books, some devotional works, and a scanty wardrobe; whilst his furniture consisted of a table, one chair, and his bed. When his companions claimed his help he would run eagerly, and gladly spare inconvenience for others, especially if they happened to be persons who had previously provoked him.

Words cannot tell how this conduct raised him in the eyes of the whole community, especially of his Superiors, and Fathers Pandolfi and Quintili, both distinguished professors in the University of Urbino; and though neither these good Fathers nor

the Superiors showed him any special mark of esteem, still they admired in him a degree of virtue by no means common, and held him up as an example of holiness to others.

In spite of his age being somewhat advanced, it is certain that he could not have been promoted to Orders so soon had he not shown the necessary qualifications of knowledge and real worth. Five months had hardly elapsed since his profession when, on the 24th of May, 1834, Whitsun Eve, he received the tonsure and four Minor Orders with the greatest humility, at the hands of Mgr. Tanara, Archbishop of Urbino, on the recommendation of his Superiors.

Everything that referred to the holy ministry seemed great in Brother Benvenuto's sight. "Great," used he to say, "is the power conferred by the dignity of Ostiarius, to call the faithful at the sound of the bell; to open the church doors to the worthy, and close them upon the unworthy; great also the privilege of reading the Word of God in church, and of teaching the faithful the first rudiments of the Faith, conferred by the office of Lector; great, again, the office of Exorcist, which gives power to recite the exorcisms for casting out devils: but greater than all the privilege of Acolytes in lighting the altar tapers and getting ready the wine and water for the Divine Sacrifice." As he pondered over these things, truly great when viewed by the light of Faith, he would shrink altogether within himself, and in his humility deem them far too high for such as he. We leave our readers to imagine what lofty and touching sentiments he must have felt when on the 16th Sunday after Pentecost, in the same year, he was promoted to

the Sacred Order of Sub-Deacon ; and how, with ever increasing Faith, he made ready for the fulness of God's ministry.

The higher he rose in the apostolic dignities at the bidding of his Superiors the more he humbled himself, acknowledging his utter unworthiness. It is beyond doubt that he never dared ask to be ordained—a step which he would have considered bold, rash, and unpardonable. If he was promoted, it was because his Superiors willed it, and he obeyed as one dead to himself, and with the self-same submission as he would have borne with taunts, insults, and being trodden under foot. On the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, just one week after his ordination as Sub-Deacon, he was raised to the Diaconate.

A year had not elapsed since Brother Benvenuto's profession, and he lacked but one step to raise him to the dignity of the Priesthood. We are in a position to affirm that during that year he made much greater progress in his studies than might have been expected from one far better endowed with natural gifts than he was. On the path of virtue, likewise, he made wonderful way ; and his Superiors watched this in silent admiration. His inward discipline grew stricter and stricter, his meditations deeper, his detachment from all created things more and more thorough, his union with God closer ; whilst withal he was open-hearted and gay.

It was lucky for him that he had to deal with enlightened Superiors, from whom not one of his spiritual gifts escaped unnoticed ; and it was on account of these virtues that they all, with one accord, asked and obtained leave of the Archbishop to promote him

to the Priesthood. The 9th of November, 25th Sunday after Pentecost, was the day appointed for this glorious event, and due notice was given him to hold himself in readiness. This news overwhelmed his soul ! He tried to excuse himself, to hold back, putting forward a thousand reasons to prove that he was unworthy of so sublime a favour; but all these arguments, prompted by his lowly estimation of self, proved unavailing, and he was told to prepare for sacred Ordination.

One who is called by God to the sacred Ministry not only studies the hidden things revealed to his inmost heart, but he also takes note of the slightest circumstances attending his calling and its fulfilment. It could not, therefore, have escaped a soul so fervent as was Benvenuto's, that he received the tonsure and Minor Orders on May 24th—a day dedicated to Our Lady, Help of Christians—that he was raised to the Sub-Diaconate on September 7th, vigil of Our Blessed Lady's Birth, to the Diaconate on the feast of the Holy Name of Mary; and finally ordained Priest on the festival dedicated to Our Lady's Patronage.

If, indeed, the holiness of a Priest's life depends on the care taken by him in preparing for Holy Orders, especially for the Priesthood, we may gather from Benvenuto's career in after-life with what exceeding diligence he must have got ready for his apostolic Mission. Yet, in his own sight he was most unworthy, and it was obedience alone that was able, so to speak, to drag him to the Altar. So completely was his mind taken up with God during the last few days preceding his ordination, so intensely was his soul rapt in God, that he forgot to give his parents notice of the coming ceremony ; and it was only five months

after the event that they heard of his promotion to the Priesthood.

The thought of God and of the exalted dignity to which he had been raised filled his mind with a holy fear which made him shudder at his own unworthiness, and humble himself even to the dust.

The great day came at last! Oh! what a day of ecstasy must it not have proved to him! Almighty God, who "even from stones hath power to raise up sons to Abraham," transformed this young man, who but two years before had been a rough country lad, into a loving Priest of Jesus Christ. Happy the man who on that day could have fixed his gaze on that beloved soul, for he would have therein beheld what deep humility, strong faith, glowing hope, kindling charity, sacred Ordination had so bountifully spread on this fresh Minister of the Altar.

CHAPTER VII.

HE LEAVES URBINO.—HIS STAY IN PESARO.

IN the short life of the holy Father S. Francis, written by the Blessed Thomas of Celano,* we read that the holy Patriarch, sitting one day amongst his first followers, was heard to heave a deep sigh; and his brethren, drawing affectionately round him, asked him to tell them what it was that thus moved him. "I sigh," answered the holy Father, "because in the whole world there is scarcely one Religious to be found,

* B. Thomæ de Celano Vita II., S.P. Francisci. De Obedientiâ.

who is perfectly obedient." "Pray, tell us, Father," said they, "what we must do in order perfectly to obey?"—and the Holy Man answered—"He that would be truly obedient must be entirely dead to himself. Take a corpse and place it where you will: it makes no resistance: it does not complain of the spot where you have laid it: it will not claim back the place it has left."

It seems to us as though the young Priest, Father Benvenuto, had carefully read over this passage, in the life of the holy Patriarch, and shaped his course according to its maxims; or else that the Seraphic Father himself had breathed into him this perfection of religious obedience. Benvenuto was, in truth, dead to himself. His leanings in a contrary direction seemed to have been righted and overcome; and he lived detached from all created things to a wonderful degree.

Two years of earnest study having now elapsed since his ordination to the Priesthood, he was told to join the community of Pesaro. "God is everywhere," he replied, in the words of St. Joseph of Cupertino, "and we are, therefore, well placed wherever He puts us." Thus saying he left for Pesaro towards the end of 1835, and having presented himself before the Superior of the convent, he took his few things to his cell, and began at once to give a proof of thorough observance of the Rule, which now came to him like a second nature. The Guardian at that time was the ex-provincial Father John Ferriini, D.D., afterwards Procurator-General of the Order, and later on, Bishop of Bagnorea. This good Father, with his keen insight, soon beheld something ex-

traordinary and great in the young Priest entrusted to his charge.

Father Bambozzi now devoted much of his time to the study of Moral Theology; and though his homely ways would at times provoke honest merriment amongst his companions, still his sterling virtues won for him their love and admiration. His even-mindedness, his poverty of spirit, his studied attempts to lower himself in the eyes of all, the modest and intense devotion with which he said Mass and chanted in choir, his motionless bearing during Meditation, struck not only the Religious of the community, but all those who saw him. Again, whenever his brethren came into his room they were bound to admire the really seraphic poverty revealed on every side.

The Superior to whom he had handed over his small stock of alms-money, seeing that his habit was getting old and threadbare, advised him to have a new one; and as he had not taken a single holiday since his noviciate, he told him to join Father Baccelliere, who was going to Ancona, and there buy it. The Superior further enjoined him to visit the convent of Civitanova, to which he had been affiliated. Father Benvenuto accordingly went to Ancona, bought his gown, and was soon on his way to Civitanova.

On that very day the Asiatic cholera, which spread such terror throughout the whole province of the Marches, broke out in Ancona. It so happened, that one of the inhabitants of Pesaro attributed the spread of the malady in that town to the introduction of goods from other places; adding that he had himself seen a Conventual friar, of the community of Pesaro, handling

pieces of cloth in Ancona, where the cholera had first broken out. On this the Fathers were greatly troubled, and thinking that Father Bambozzi must be the person alluded to, they forthwith communicated with the municipal officers, who were taking stringent measures against the spread of the plague.

Meanwhile, Father Bambozzi having left Civitanova, reached Osimo, where, on knocking at the closed gate, the watchman on duty told him that if he came from Ancona he could not come in, and if from elsewhere, that he would be let in at S. James's Gate, which lies in another part of the town. But Father Bambozzi kept on knocking, thrusting his bill of health received at Civitanova through the chinks of the gate, and exclaiming in his holy simplicity : "But do see it, for I must come in." At length the watchman, harassed and enraged, opened the gate and greeted him with a volley of upbraiding insolence, which Father Benvenuto bore with his wonted calmness, and without retort. On arriving at the convent he found his companion, Father Baccelliere, already there ; and they started together on the road home.

No sooner had they reached the gates of Pesaro than their carriage was stopped, and they were ordered not to stir from where they were. The fact was, that the unlucky Fathers were supposed to be plague-stricken, and the authorities, who had been lying in wait for them, at once sent them on to the Villa Vittoria under escort, refusing even to look at their bill of health. On halting at the Villa, they were told to alight, and to touch nothing save their luggage, which they had to take up themselves to the very top of the house. Here they stayed for

many hours without seeing a living soul ; and as they could not leave their rooms they grew quite faint with hunger.

Towards nightfall some persons were heard coming upstairs, and one of them seemed to call out and to make a noise with the plates, after which they all rushed downstairs again so as not even to look on the unwelcome guests. These were the servants of the house, who, after taking up some soup and a few necessary things, disappeared for the rest of the day. As they slept in the same room, his friend noticed Father Bambozzi rise out of bed, kneel down to pray and try to read his Breviary and Moral Theology by the light which poured in through the window. Father Bambozzi led the same regular life in this place as in the cloister. His one great grief was not being allowed to say Mass, or at least to assist at the Holy Sacrifice ; but he resigned himself even to this loss, humbling himself before God and making a thousand resolutions to celebrate more worthily when he should be free to do so.

Towards the end of their stay the strict watch was relaxed, and they were allowed to walk about the villa and talk to the people. Thus did Father Bambozzi find occasion to converse with the soldiers of the watch on the vanities of the world ; and so simple and winning were his ways, that one of these men left the army to become an Observant friar. After a fortnight's seclusion they were set free by the chief of the establishment, who, however, claimed payment for their board. On this Father Baccelliere raised his voice in protest, saying that no claim for payment could be made as the officials had refused to look at the clean

bill of health they had presented. "Gently, gently, my friend," urged Father Bambozzi; "I will ask Father Guardian's leave to pay the account out of my alms-money"; and this so edified the official, that he recognised the unfairness of not having looked at their papers, and obtained exemption of payment for them both. Thus the two Fathers parted in peace and freedom; each one making for his own convent.

The calm and peaceful conduct of Father Bambozzi was soon bruited abroad, and proved a source of edification, not only to the officials and household of the Villa Vittoria, but to all who heard of his adventure. On his return to the convent, all his good brethren, whose dread of the cholera had occasioned his quarantine, came forward to beg his forgiveness; but he greeted them all merrily. Delighted at being in their midst once more, he at once took to his former religious practices as if nothing at all had happened.

Many persons of distinction obtained leave of the Guardian to entrust their children to Father Bambozzi's care, to be instructed in the rudiments of Christian and secular learning. This task he undertook very willingly, giving lessons both morning and afternoon, and showing such kindness as to make his pupils attached to him. The good father never allowed the work of his small class to come in the way of his higher duties. He not only made golden use of every moment of time, but whenever the hours of the day proved insufficient, he studied his Moral Theology at night.

He would not have overlooked this study for all the world; "because," as he used to say, "it is true that by prayer we come closer to God, but by a

sound knowledge of Moral Theology we are enabled to bring our neighbour likewise nearer to Him. We are not raised to the Priesthood for ourselves, but for others." This great thought braced him in his struggle against self; it urged him to deprive himself of sleep, and to limit his night's rest within three or four hours, and sometimes even less.

On the 13th of July the Guardian, to his own great regret, told Father Bambozzi that the Provincial had sent word for him to leave for Camerano, near Ancona. On hearing this, the good father broke off in the middle of his lessons—for he was at the time engaged in teaching—took a hasty farewell of his pupils, bidding them to keep good; and making up his light bundle went out to hail a conveyance. It was no use telling him that he might stay a few days longer, and that there was no need for such haste, for he answered: "Orders must be complied with at once." Asking the Superior's blessing he started off that same evening without even waiting to wish good-bye to his brethren, who were out taking their walk. This act of ready obedience gave edification not only to the community, but many of his acquaintance likewise declared themselves deeply impressed by it. "Better is obedience than sacrifice," says the Holy Ghost; and such prompt obedience as this must bring down a twofold blessing and reward.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS ARRIVAL AND STAY IN CAMERANO.

FATHER BENVENTO's change of quarters from Pesaro to Camerano—from a busy cloister to a house where he was to be the only Priest—from a well-appointed and much frequented church to one which was far from being thus favoured, might well have dismayed one less zealous in the service of God. But he merely said, "God must be served in little things as well as great." Removed from companions whose esteem he had so completely won, he comforted himself, saying: "The tenderest affection towards our brethren must not clash with perfect obedience, which the love of God may demand of us. The Saints fled those places where they were esteemed; and I, who am but a wretched sinner, ought not only to be willing to forego the pleasurable society of my brethren, but rejoice at being despised by all." This deep sense of humility, strengthened as it was by grace, made him overcome all temptations against the virtue of obedience, and lucky for him that he had such well-tempered weapons in hand for the struggle that was awaiting him!

In the year 1837 the small convent of Camerano had been re-opened, and placed for some time under the charge of an old lay-brother, who managed in one way or another to prevent a Father from being appointed to its custody—the church being temporarily served by secular Priests. In this he succeeded the more easily, because the Superiors, who had re-opened

many religious houses at the Bishop's request, found it at first impossible to distribute ordained Religious amongst them all. Thus it happened, that the poor lay-brother had grown proud of his achievements, and no doubt persuaded himself that no one was able to administer the place half so well as he.

It is but too well known that when a man loses the spirit proper to his condition and standing, words of fair reason are lost upon him. Hence we may imagine the greeting which Father Bambozzi met with, at the hands of this unfortunate lay-brother, on arriving at Camerano as President, in obedience to the Provincial's order. At first, the lay-brother took him for a Religious who had halted on his journey ; but when he found out that Father Benvenuto was to stay, and furthermore in the capacity of President, all his long-cherished visions vanished in a twinkling, and he gave way to unseemly bursts of passion. He mocked the good father, jeered at him, grumbled, and spoke against him before others ; but all these insults Father Bambozzi bore in silence, mindful—after the example of the Apostles and his holy Patriarch—to draw good from them. He might at once have freed himself from this cross, by exposing the lay-brother's conduct, and suggesting that the poor man might be sent elsewhere for his own good ; but he forebore doing so, saying : " We must never shake off from our shoulders the cross which God sends us, but rather carry it onward in the path of virtue." He might also have justly reproved and upbraided the unfortunate man ; but he chose the mildest means which charity could dictate ; and never swerved from his set purpose of suffering all things in holy peace.

On his first arriving at Camerano, Father Bambozzi had taken steps to obtain faculties for hearing confessions. This necessitated his presenting himself at the Bishop's palace in Ancona to undergo the usual examination. He accordingly set out on foot one morning in December by appointment, reached Ancona, said Mass, passed the examination, and then started homewards without having tasted food. On his way back he suffered intensely from cold, as the snow was falling heavily, and still more from the weakness caused by hunger. After halting several times for rest, he at length reached the convent, hoping to find his dinner ready for him. The lay-brother, however, taking it for granted that Father Bambozzi had dined in Ancona, had not prepared anything for his Superior, who, in consequence, had nothing set before him but dry bread and the few scraps left from the brother's meal. Having eaten of this poor fare, and thanked God heartily, the good Father withdrew to his room for rest without making a single comment.

In due time Monsignore Cadolini, Bishop of Ancona, sent him his faculties, whereupon he at once began his apostolic work. Being the only Priest in the house, he was, of course, free from all choir duties; nevertheless he used to rise very early in the morning, say his prayers, with part of the Divine Office, and meditate for an hour and more. If no one happened to be waiting for him at the confessional he would read and study until some one came; and then, going down to church, stay there till mid-day—at which hour he used to say Mass for the greater convenience of the faithful. After his thanksgiving he would go back to

the confessional—if any one wished to see him—otherwise he retired to his cell to pray and study till dinner-time.

On receiving his faculties, Father Benvenuto sent word to the parish Priests and Curates of the neighbouring churches, begging them to apply to him whenever they needed help for ecclesiastical functions or attending the sick. Hence it was that he never had a moment's rest, and might be seen hastening from his confessional to some church, where, after officiating as Deacon or Sub-Deacon, he hurried back to his own penitents. Whenever he was called to a sick person he rose at once—even from his dinner-table—and was off without a moment's delay, saying: “With the sick there is no time to lose; grace passes away in a moment; and in a moment death may come.” Sometimes he has been known to leave the convent without his hat, so as not to waste time in fetching it from his room.

When Father Benvenuto's parents heard of his arrival at Camerano, which is only an hour's walk from their home, they were naturally anxious to see him; and, as might have been expected, his father called at the convent to pay him a visit. No sooner, however, had the lay-brother learnt that the newcomer was the President's father, than he began to mutter between his teeth and to upbraid him as one coming to live at the convent's expense. The old man, after listening for some time to this unprovoked abuse, raised his voice and loudly insisted on seeing his son.

They were thus at high words, when Father Bambozzi, who had just finished his Office and was going

upstairs, recognised his own father's voice, and heard the lay-brother's unbecoming words. For a moment he was moved with indignation; but no sooner did resentment show itself—and it was surely pardonable under the circumstances—than he resolved not to speak an angry word; and taking up a ball which happened to lie on the stairs, he went up playing with it till he suddenly appeared in the midst of the fray. Without opening his lips, he smiled at his father, beckoned him towards his room, and, as soon as they were seated, began to ask news about the family.

The worthy old man, however, began complaining of the ill-usage he had met with; but his son soon found means to smother this just indignation, as he had done his own, and began talking about home, whereupon he learned that his brother Joseph was already a lay-brother amongst the Oratorian Fathers at Sant' Elpidio-on-Sea, and that his sister Mary was anxious to join a religious Order. In place of the flush of anger which Father Benvenuto had at first experienced, a feeling of pure joy and consolation filled his soul, and he thanked God for these good tidings. He sent word to his sister to begin studying Latin so as to fit herself for the duties of a choir-nun, but, above all, he besought her to love God exceedingly, since He was pleased to choose her for His spouse. After sending his love to his mother and those at home, he saw the old man safely off, and withdrew alone and in peace.

A few days later came his mother, who had not seen him for well-nigh five years, and she brought him some presents, which he, however, refused in a nice way, telling her to put them by for his sister, as they

would be useful to her when she became a nun. He then exhorted her with glowing zeal not to set her heart on the things of this life, but to look to the welfare of her soul. He begged all the members of the family to pray for him; promised to remember them often before God; and, after a few pious and kindly words, offered his mother some pictures and devout keepsakes for herself and those at home: after which he withdrew to his cell, leaving her delighted at having a son so detached from all the things of the world.

Father Benvenuto soon found a good Priest who undertook to teach his sister Latin, and she, on her part, devoted her best energies to this study. One day his mother and sister came to see him at Camerano, to consult him on the subject of the young girl's calling to a religious life. After having heard her read, he told her that she must wait still longer, but at the same time he cheered her, saying that God, Who had called her to be His handmaid in the cloister, would not fail to help her to overcome the obstacles in her way. He touched on many other subjects, which urged on that good maiden in her holy longing to become a Spouse of Jesus Christ; and he promised, with the Superiors' leave, to provide her with part of her dowry.

Whenever Father Benvenuto met with a soul showing signs of a calling to God's special service, he always did his best to further its faithful correspondence with Grace. We have before us the following statement sent to us by a good Priest of the neighbourhood of Camerano:

"During the twelvemonth Father Bambozzi lived

in these parts, the life he led was truly religious, exemplary and blameless. In hearing confessions he evinced unflagging zeal, and his warning voice and sound counsel roused many a soul to the practice of good works."

Oh ! surely a man who gave himself so thoroughly to God and to his neighbour, may well be held up as a bright example both to the faithful and to the ministers of the Gospel !

CHAPTER IX.

HE IS SENT TO THE CONVENT OF SANTA VITTORIA DI FRATTE ROSEE.

IN the ancient legation of Urbino and Pesaro, and in the diocese of Fossombrone, twelve miles from that town, the small domain of Fratte Rosee stretches along the southern slope of a smiling and well-cultivated hill. Eastward lies the castle of Torre, and in the centre of a rising hill towers the convent of Santa Vittoria, whose foundation is said to date from the Middle Ages. The architecture of the church is in good taste, and when it was restored during the last century, a beautiful and costly altar was added to its treasures. Within those cloistered walls may yet be seen the room in which S. Joseph of Cupertino spent a night when on his way from Fossombrone to Osimo, where he was destined to spend the latter years of his life, and leave his hallowed remains. This convent lies in a lovely spot, far removed from any other dwelling ; and thither obedience directed Father Bambozzi towards the close

of the year 1838, where, later on, he was elected Superior.

We need not speak of the grief which the zealous Father's departure caused the good folk of Camerano ; for we have seen how deservedly he had won their confidence, sympathy and love. The convent of Fratte Rosee was, without doubt, a solitude whither the Almighty led this chosen soul, to make him taste the sweets of Heaven, and appeal more intimately to his heart.

Hitherto we have seen Father Bambozzi, paying heed chiefly to the study of Moral Theology. God, however, had destined him to be the guide of many souls ; and henceforth we shall see him taking up other books without, on that account, overlooking his former studies. We shall also notice a further and marked development of his intellectual attainments.

It is not unlikely that Father Benvenuto might have turned over some works on Mystic Theology before coming to Fratte, but it is beyond doubt that it was in this blissful solitude, and in the holy peace which he there enjoyed, that he found leisure for the first time to dive into its depths and drink freely of its pure and healing waters. The first book he read was S. Theresa's life, written by herself ; and in that golden work he found such exalted thoughts, that he could hardly be induced to lay it aside. He wondered at the goodness of God, who clothed that holy maiden, even as a child, with His Spirit, and called her to Himself by the hidden paths of love. He read of the several ways in which God purifies the senses and the spirit by gradually increasing grades of prayer ; and in all this he beheld the inworkings of his own soul,

which had never struck him as exceptional before. Distrustful of self, however, and faithfully following the advice the Saint so often gives in her works, he took counsel of experienced and enlightened persons—disclosing to them all the concerns of his soul and those lofty grades of prayer with which he had unwittingly become familiar. Thus it was that in that lonesome retreat he discovered the many new favours with which the Almighty was enriching his soul.

Oh ! how great God is towards the man who knows how to make himself little ! The very thought of these new graces, as soon as they became known to him, made Father Benvenuto humble himself even to the dust. He has been seen to shake like a leaf, and bow down his head at the thought of having to give an account of so many sublime favours. By the shining light which poured upon his soul, he turned his eyes inwardly, and there beheld many failings, so gross and hideous in his sight, that he wondered how God could bear with him any longer and not bury him in the depths of hell.

The light which the Almighty, in His boundless goodness, sheds on His chosen souls makes them discern the faintest blemish that mars their loveliness. At this sight those souls—so eager to become like unto their Divine Spouse—blush with shame, and, conscious of their unworthiness, would fain hide themselves from the gaze of their fellow-men. God gives these lights, so that acknowledging their own infidelities to grace, they may seek to render themselves spotlessly pure even to His all-seeing Eye.

It was the dazzling splendour of this heavenly light,

as Father Benvenuto would often say, that made our dear Father S. Francis and so many other Saints hold themselves openly as the greatest sinners in the world. Had it not been thus, they would have lied in proclaiming themselves as the worst amongst men. They deemed themselves guilty above all, because, having received by far the greater meed of grace, they saw their unbounded ingratitude. "Had the most wicked amongst men," used the Seraphic Father to say, "received from God the immense accumulation of graces, which I have received, they would by this time have become Saints, whilst I go on the same as before."

As this Divine light, wherever it shines, reveals and heightens the blemishes of the soul, so, in proportion as it is weaker or stronger, does it produce pain, which, though unmistakably the effect of love, is yet so keen, so full of bitterness, as to steep the soul in anguish. Whilst enduring these harrowing pangs, the soul becomes gradually cleansed from those little failings which rendered it unworthy of God's perfect pleasure; and, little by little, it rises to that sweet and most peaceful contemplation of its Creator, which gives a real foretaste of the joys of heaven.

Our task is not here to give lessons in Mystic Theology; we have merely referred to this subject to hint, but slightly, at the great advantages which Father Benvenuto derived from the sweet solitude of Fratte Rosee. Much of his time in the cloister was given to the study of that wonderful mystic writer, S. John of the Cross, one of the brightest lights of the Carmelite Order and the Director of S. Theresa. Many and many fresh flowers of devotion did Father Benvenuto cull here and there from the works of this great saint,

whom he chose, along with S. Theresa, as his protector and master.

It seems incredible that one endowed with such scanty learning should have fathomed matters so abstruse and difficult, and have been able to explain and unfold them to others with such clearness and precision as to have astonished many a master in Divinity. We believe that our dear Lord called him to that lonely spot in order to feed him plentifully on that sweetness which is hard to be found amidst the turmoil and bustle of the world.

However much Father Benvenuto may have loved to linger on the sweet delights of contemplation, he still continued his study of Moral Theology; well knowing that the life of the friars Minor is both contemplative and active. On the 13th of August, 1838, the Bishop of Fossombrone sent him faculties to hear the confessions of the people; and we find him at once setting to work in the holy ministry. Each day, but especially on feast days, many came from Fratte, from Torre, Sorbolongo and other neighbouring hamlets to see him in the confessional; and such was the charity which he showed towards all, that his reputation was noised throughout the country, and the number of his penitents considerably increased. As these were mostly working people, who could only come to him on holidays, Father Bambozzi had much time to give to the preparation of the Sunday sermons, spiritual exercises and discourses delivered by him in the convent and neighbouring districts. His style was simple, and his matter well thought out; whilst his words struck home, being spoken from his own heart and addressed to an audience simple-minded

and eagerly desirous of the bread of life. The plainness of Father Bambozzi's speech and the holiness of his life made his sermons doubly persuasive, so that they bore abundant and early fruit throughout the neighbourhood.

Father Benvenuto displayed the same charity, activity, and zeal at Fratte Rosee, that had so thoroughly endeared him to the people of Camerano. He was, in fact, all and all to them. We are continually receiving fresh testimony from the Priests of this neighbourhood, of the holy life he led amongst them. One of them who had been his penitent for many years affirms that he had noted in him unfailing tokens of virtue, both as a Religious, an ascetic, and an Apostle. Another of his young penitents, now a Priest, speaks in the same strain of his great virtues, and especially of his active spirit of prayer, penance and charity. It is quite beyond doubt that he was held in those parts as a man of God, and enjoyed the reputation of being a Saint.

Whenever there happened to arise any quarrel or unpleasantness in any household, the good Father at once hastened to the spot and acted as a peacemaker. If he heard that misfortune had befallen any one, to him he sped; and his words of heartfelt charity have soothed and healed many an aching heart. He was constantly being stopped during his walks, now by one, now by another, for advice, for help, or some other need; yet he had a kind and ready word for all, and all went away happy. Father Benvenuto never grew tired of his work, however monotonous and oft-repeated, but on the contrary, always seemed ready for fresh labours. Merely to have seen him work and

heard him speak would have convinced any one that he bore God constantly in mind.

This ever-present thought of God made him abstracted to the point of forgetting the most necessary things of life. Going one day to Sinigaglia to confer with his Director, who lived in that town, he was so rapt in God that he actually left the house without taking leave of his confessor, and even forgot to put on his hat. The country-folk seeing him on the road bare-headed called out: "Look at that friar, without his hat." Seeing that they were talking about him, and finding out the cause, he went back to the convent and said to the lay-brother who opened the door to him: "Poor Father Bambozzi has lost his head; be kind enough to let him have the hat he has left behind;" on hearing which, all the Fathers judged that his forgetfulness had proceeded not from natural causes, but from his being altogether abstracted from the things of the world and absorbed in contemplation.

On the feast of the Portiuncula, which falls on the 2nd of August, crowds used to flock to the church of Santa Vittoria for the Indulgence. It was Father Bambozzi's special delight to invite as many Priests as he could to hear the people's confessions, and lend becoming solemnity to the occasion. In fact, he did all in his power to make this holy gathering one of mutual edification for the Priests of the neighbourhood and of the greatest possible advantage to the faithful.

On all the festivals of the Order—and especially that of the Immaculate Conception—Father Benvenuto invited these good Priests in the same spirit, and gave them a hearty welcome.

On one of these occasions, speaking of his love for solitude, he said : " What a pleasant thing it would be to hew out small grottos all about here, or to build up small hermitages, so as to abide at all hours with Almighty God ; to go to church in the morning, to celebrate Mass, and say the Office there, and then come back to one's own cell !" Upon this, one of the company answered : " Well, Father Guardian, if you place a butt of good wine in one of those grottos, a certain friend of ours will turn hermit very willingly." This sally pointed to one of the servants of the convent who was given to drinking. Father Bambozzi held his peace, and blushed at having unwittingly given rise to this slight want of charity. He quickly turned the subject, and all were impressed by his conduct which betokened a spotless conscience and real charity.

As a matter of fact, it is impossible to tell how the good Father suffered from the drunken habits of this poor servant, and with what charity he tried to wean him from them. Many a time had the unfortunate man, after quarrelling with others, fallen senseless on the ground and lain grovelling there till Father Bambozzi took him bodily upstairs and put him to bed with great care and kindness. He could have easily got rid of the man, but he wished once more to profit spiritually by this trial, and try to save the soul of an unfortunate fellow-creature.

When a man becomes inured to vice, charity, threats and punishments are all wasted upon him. If sin is an awful evil, the constant persistence in it is still more woeful. S. Augustine well and truly says, that " God gives life to the impious that they may be con-

verted to good, and afford opportunities to the just for the practice of virtue.” Hence it is, that God’s ministers must never forsake the sinner as long as there remains the least chance of saving him.

In the present instance the servant derived no good from the Superior’s unflagging charity, though the good Father never forsook him. Almighty God made use of this man’s life to increase Father Bambazzi’s charity, to make his virtue cast deeper root and to set a useful example of forbearance to the Priesthood, whom God will reward in His own good time, though their charity may fall on unfruitful soil.

The convent of Santa Vittoria had, prior to Father Benvenuto’s coming, been frequently attacked and plundered by brigands ; and, indeed, before he had lived there many months he heard, in great secrecy, that on a certain night another assault was intended, at which the whole community was much alarmed.

The spot in which the convent lay was, as we have already said, very lonely : there was no police at hand, and to call for help was useless. The community, therefore, expected to be left, as on former occasions, to the tender mercies of these ruffians. Father Benvenuto alone was undismayed, and strove to cheer up his brethren. Meanwhile getting together all available lamps, and filling them with oil, he set them in each room of the convent, and lighting them three hours after sunset, went into church and prayed till a late hour. The brigands came, as had been expected, but seeing so many lights in the cells, and fearing to be roughly handled, stole off without attempting any violence.

On the following day, when the Fathers asked their

Guardian how he had succeeded in overawing the robbers, he smilingly held up his beads, saying : "This is the weapon that availeth against all our enemies;" and he then told them about the lighted lamps.

A year later, when the Custodian made his visit to Santa Vittoria, he asked the oldest amongst the friars, Father Angelo Zenobi, how long it was since the ill-fated house had been last attacked by the brigands. He answered : "We have very little fear now, because Father Benvenuto goes to bed very late, and spends a great part of the night in prayer, for he never goes to rest till he has completed his many devotions."

During his stay at Fratte Rosee, Father Benvenuto had the toilsome office of Vicar of the Holy Office imposed upon him, in which capacity he displayed holy and prudent zeal. One day he felt it his duty to send for a certain individual, accused of open blasphemy. When the man came to him Father Benvenuto exhorted him, in the language of ardent charity, to desist from his wicked practice, pointing out how utterly purposeless were such bursts of passion, and how heinous the wrong offered to the Almighty. The man stood upright and unmoved ; and when the warning was over he took up his hat, and with scornful glances left the room without even bowing.

Not many days later, as Father Bambozzi was out on a sick call, he fell in with this blasphemer, who was armed with a knotted stick, with which he struck the good Father several times. At the first blow, instead of offering resistance, Father Bambozzi fell down on his knees and joined his hands, as when at prayer. The ruffian went on belabouring him, and when he had spent his rage in blows and mockery, he took

to flight across country, leaving his bruised and ill-used victim in such a sad condition that he could hardly rise to his feet. In spite of all, Father Benvenuto dragged himself to the place where he had been called, and begged pardon for being so late, without even referring to what had happened.

Meanwhile, the blasphemer, expecting to have the police at his heels with hue-and-cry, kept himself hidden for several days. Time went on, however, and not a soul came to molest him. Seeing this, he plucked up courage and went out of doors; but none of his neighbours seemed aware of his misdeed. He was, in fact, a free man, just as if he had done nothing to forfeit his right of freedom. This indeed outwitted him. Was it possible that an agent of the Inquisition, with all the power vested in him, and the police at his bidding, should have allowed himself to be waylaid and beaten, and after all forbear taking revenge? The very thought seemed preposterous! Yet it came and came again before his mind. There was, indeed, no other clue to the dilemma; for if he was out of all danger, it was to his victim's silence that he owed it.

A new train of thoughts then rushed on his mind. He pictured in vivid colours the minister of God falling before him, on bended knees and joined hands—speechless under assault. The sinner's face burned with shame as he recognised the enormity of his guilt and the wicked life that had led to it. His heart was stung with remorse; and overcoming his pride, he determined to go and ask forgiveness of Father Bambozzi. What better father could he have chosen? Who more willing to stretch out his arms and welcome him? What better physician could he have found for the

deep and festering sores of his soul ; what more generous heart wherein to pour forth his sorrow ?

As he resolved, so he acted. He went to the convent, cast himself on his knees and begged pardon of him he had so mercilessly ill-used. A right hearty welcome greeted his return to a sense of duty, and the good Father at once set to work with the repentant sinner ; helping him to break through the meshes of his guilt, and to make his peace with God.

The conversion of that sinner was the fruit of a Christian's virtue. We can easily imagine how, like the Holy Apostles, Father Bambozzi took delight in suffering and being ill-treated for the Name of Jesus Christ ; and that after the example of the holy Leviite Stephen, he offered up prayers for the miscreant who had assailed him. Meekness is so dear to our loving Saviour, that—though He is the Source of all that is holy and good—it was by this gentle virtue that He would give such needful lessons to the world and teach us the evils of retaliation : “ Who when He was reviled did not revile.”

However keen may have been the slights offered to Father Bambozzi during life, he never was known to show resentment, to appeal to courts of law, nor even to utter a word of complaint. If the injury done against him by this converted blasphemer has reached us, it was the repentant sinner himself who made it known.

CHAPTER X.

FATHER BENVENUTO AND HIS SISTER MARY.

WHILST Father Bambozzi was growing more and more perfect in his retreat at Fratte, he received many letters from his sister Mary on the subject of her religious calling. After making inquiries of several communities, he decided on choosing the Benedictine Monastery of Mondavio in the diocese of Fano, as the future home of his sister. He accordingly sent word to his parents towards the close of the year '41, that she would be received, by that community, if she wished it.

At the opening of the following year the young girl left her home and parents for the cloister; and after a severe probation the good nuns decided on clothing her with the religious habit on the 17th of May, 1843, giving her the name of Dame Scholastica.

Her subsequent conduct as a novice gave such decided hopes of her becoming a good and holy nun, that the whole community, with one accord, decided on allowing her to make her solemn vows on the 19th of May, 1844, in the hands of the Lady Abbess Forcielli.

Mondavio not being far from Fratte, Father Benvenuto used often to go and see his sister. On these occasions their conversations—or more rightly, their spiritual conferences—turned upon God alone, and in them the things of the world found no place. Beyond his sister and the Lady Abbess, the good Father never spoke to any member of the community.

We trust that our readers will be pleased with what we are about to lay before them concerning this dutiful

daughter of S. Benedict, especially as the matter is so closely bound up with her brother's life, that it reveals to us the spirit which prompted Father Benvenuto in his dealings with his neighbour.

At the outset of her monastic life, being by nature rather prone to anger, Dame Scholastica fought bravely against this failing ; and so unflinchingly did she withstand even the slightest assault of the enemy, that she at length had but few temptations to cope with, and these she readily mastered.

The good Sister practised many acts of self-denial, and never rose from the community-table without having done some little, unpretentious act of mortification. In conversation she loved rather to listen than to talk ; mindful of the Rule of her holy Father, who in more places than one recommends silence to his children. Withal, she was pleasing in her ways, cheerful and open-hearted. Those who knew her well tell us that her whole life was one of unceasing prayer ; whilst she loved obedience so perfectly that she would have gladly given up everything rather than have failed therein.

Dame Scholastica was a type of modest reserve at all times and in all places,—rather grave in her bearing, though always kind. Charity was her brightest jewel : she ministered with all solicitude to the wants of her Sisters without distinction ; comforting them to the utmost of her power ; bearing with them, and striving to screen or at least to excuse their failings. Her longing for Holy Communion was so great, that she accounted the day as lost in which she could not partake of the Heavenly Feast ; and when Father Louis Piccioli—a Conventual friar, who

directed that community—granted them all leave for daily Communion, our good sister was so filled with joy that she could not keep it hidden from the other nuns.

At the close of the year 1844, Dame Scholastica wrote to her brother asking for suggestions, the better to enable her to correspond with grace. In answer, he sent her the following letter, which shows what lofty sentiments united these two chosen souls :

“MY DEAR SISTER,

“I rejoice at the good will and care you have shown in reading my poor and rough sentences directed to the culture of your beautiful soul. I will not cease praying the Almighty in union with you; and would we were both ever present before Him, with all our shortcomings, praying for those living in the world, that He may draw us all to Himself.

“As for you, my happy sister, what I want you to do above all is to go on your way in holy peace, trying unremittingly to give your whole self to God; because while He on His part certainly wishes to make us great Saints, we on ours hinder Him, by clinging to the earth and not placing all our concerns in His hands.

“In order to understand what I am saying, see how our Blessed Lord lived as mortal man amongst us, who although He was God, yet gave Himself up wholly to His Eternal Father, and never ceased telling us that He was doing His beloved Father’s Will. During these hallowed days go and offer your gifts at the stable of Bethlehem with the holy Kings; and watch there in spirit with Mary and Joseph. After the octave of the Epiphany, I would suggest as a holy practice, your spending thirty-three days, consecu-

tively, in memory of the thirty-three years during which Our Lord Jesus Christ toiled amongst us here on earth. On each of these days I would have you ponder on Our Saviour's life, dwelling on the pains which He therein suffered ; but you must do this in a peaceful manner, without any kind of exaggeration, striving on the contrary to spend each day in the practice of holy modesty and of that virtue which you think He cherished above all others. Offer Him Holy Communion also, at least in spirit ; and make a constant oblation of yourself to Him—even as He offered Himself to His Heavenly Father. Do this especially during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. If you think fit you may, besides, kneel down and adore Him fifteen times each day, in honour of the fifteen mysteries of the holy Rosary ; kiss the ground thirty-three times in honour of His holy life ; and perform some further penance in honour of the Most Holy Trinity. I do not add any fresh prayers, because I think you have already enough.

“ Give my regards to the Lady Abbess and all the nuns, and I will pray earnestly on their behalf, that they may walk swiftly on the road to Jesus, Our Blessed Spouse. When I find an opportunity, I will send you the other small instruments of penance. My daughter and dear sister, let us be united to God. Recommending myself to the prayers of you all, I am, etc.*

“ BR. BENV. BAMBOZZI, M.C., Great Sinner.

“ Osimo, December 29, 1844.”

* The Italian runs thus : “ Sono di V. R. Umo, e Dev. servo,” which shows great respect for the religious character of his sister.
—*Translator's Note.*

About this time Father Bambozzi composed and sent to his sister a "Rule of Life," in compliance with a wish she had expressed on making her religious profession. It runs as follows :

"RULE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

"Praised be the most precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

"Most beloved sister in the Lord,—Receive this method of a religious and perfect life ; and since you have wished and asked for it, see that you keep it strictly, as if it had been sent you from heaven. Reflect, that, at the hour of death, this will either bring you great comfort or else exceeding sorrow ; for it shall accompany you before the Divine Tribunal and affect your fate either for weal or for woe.

"Oh ! what great sweetness shall you not experience in those last moments, if you but keep these rules ! In your overflowing joy you will then wish to kiss these pages, which have held you bound to your God and your Spouse. But if you cannot do this, you will find true happiness in pouring forth your heart to your dear Lord ; grasping the crucifix lying at your side ; kissing the Sacred Wounds and thanking your heavenly Spouse, Jesus, for whose sake you have observed all this, and to whom you have been ever faithful. Thus, with grateful and overflowing love you will breathe forth your soul and fly to that Lord, who is making ready for you a reward worthy of Himself. 'Be thou faithful even unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.'

"As perfection cannot be reached except by a ladder,* and step by step, behold the stepping-stones by which you are to ascend.

"I. PERFECTION.—Let this be your continual longing.

"The first step of this ladder calls for a constant desire, on your part, for PERFECTION. You must, however, on no account allow yourself to be low-spirited when you think that you have done nothing profitable. Let this desire make you rise in the morning after about six hours of unbroken rest; dress yourself with all modesty—praying God to clothe you with all virtues, and to give you grace not to lose a moment's time. Let it urge you to cast yourself on your knees before your crucified Lord, or before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration and thanksgiving. At the same time offer your whole being in all humility to God, and beseech Him to guide you on the road to perfection. To this end you must direct all your prayers throughout the day.

"II. OBSERVANCE OF THE RULE.—Let this be the road to it.

"And since the OBSERVANCE OF THE RULE is the road to perfection, you must at once begin to put it into practice, both readily and exactly; taking care to be always the first in assisting at the community acts. Harken to the call of the bell as you would to God's

* A small book of meditations founded on this "Ladder of Perfection" of Father Bambozzi's has lately been published by Father Antonio Renzi, M.C., and is entitled "La Perfezione Christiana secondo gli ammaestramenti del Servo di Dio : Padre Maestro Benvenuto Bambozzi, M.C."—*Translator's Note.*

voice. Dwell on the thought that in the observance of the Rule may be said to consist all that perfection which you are seeking. As one who does not keep the whole Law cannot be a good Christian; neither can he who does not observe the whole Rule be a perfect Religious.

“The vow of Obedience calls for the laying aside of your own will; the vow of Poverty withdraws from you all ownership, and allows you the mere use of what is necessary; whilst to keep the vow of Chastity you must be all-wary—not speaking with persons living in the world, but shunning the parlour, holding a modest reserve over your eyes and a watchful guard over your tongue, lest it yield itself to worldly speech. You must, moreover, fence about your heart, lest it cleave to the love of any creature, even though a Religious.

“III. LOVE OF GOD.—Let this be its motive.

“In striving to reach perfection and to follow out your Rule, see that the Love of God be your only motive. Call this often to mind during the day; and offer this pure motive as a prayer to God.

“As the love of God is the bond of perfection, let this be the object of your union with Him, for in proportion as you grow in the love of God, so will you grow in holiness. Yearn, therefore, to love and to please God; for S. Theresa says that He takes such delight in desires that He looks upon them as already fulfilled.

“To your desires, however, you must add a strong resolve to do all you can to please Him. The same Saint assures us that she was willing to lose everything—even life itself—rather than cause Him the

least displeasure. And although you may well love God out of gratitude, yet it is good to accustom yourself to love Him purely for His own sake; because in Himself He is infinite goodness. Dwell often on His beauty, His goodness, His boundless and intrinsic perfections, according as Faith prompts you. Bear in mind that God is jealous, and will not suffer other loves in a heart consecrated to Him, than those directed to Himself.

“Love that which God loves, and hate that which God hates. It is by thinking of Him, by speaking of Him, by listening to others talking about Him, by suffering with Him, and being united with Him, that you shall know that you love God.

“IV. GOD’S GLORY.—Let this be the end in view.

“You will, however, never love Him perfectly, if in all your doings you think not exclusively of His GLORY, and make all your words and works subordinate to this one end. Say this often and earnestly to yourself and to God in prayer, with a view of shutting out every inkling of self-love, which is the greatest hindrance to the perfect love of God and the thief of His glory. In a word, see that you wage unrelenting warfare against it, and that you stubbornly oppose all your own wishes and leanings, however good and useful they may seem to you.

“In order to bring this about, never say or do anything which you cannot offer to God. Make a daily examination of conscience on this subject of self-love, seeking your spiritual welfare, solely for the greater glory of God.

"V. THE WILL OF GOD.—Let this be its rule.

" And with a view of attaining this grand spirit of seeking God's glory, look on the WILL OF GOD as the rule of all your actions ; recognise it in the voice of your Superiors, your confessor, the Lady Abbess, her substitute, or any creature whatsoever—provided that it be not opposed to what you know to be right. Do this even in your daily avocations, and hold it of faith that nothing—except sin—can befall you that is not willed by God ; and that all may be turned to His greater glory and to your eternal welfare.

" Hence you must bless the Almighty in your crosses, sicknesses, spiritual dryness and miseries, as well as in health, plenty, consolations and comforts ; striving to seem joyful, unsolicitous, happy and even-minded at all times. Often protest that you wish for naught but the glory of God, saying : ' Thy Will, O Lord, be done in me and over me, always and in all things.'

"VI. THE GRACE OF GOD.—Let this be its origin and source.

" Of all this, however, you will be able to do nothing without the GRACE OF GOD, which is the beginning, impelling force, fulfilment and end of all that is good. All that pleases God in you, must by you be attributed to Him ; and you must hold, as of faith, that there is no merit in yourself, but that all is the outcome of His bounty, and that He has preferred you to very many others, who would have responded to Grace far better than you have done. Would that you could realise how much you stand in need of Grace, not only as communicated to you in Holy Baptism and

sacramental confession, but of actual graces, such as holy inspirations, good example, warnings and corrections.

“Were you even conscious that these gifts abounded within you, do not cease thanking the Giver of all good for them, beseeching Him to increase them; and rest convinced that without His unceasing help you can do naught but sin against Him. S. Augustine used to say to God: ‘Give, O Lord, what Thou willest, and will what Thou pleasest.’ Do you likewise.

“VII. TRUST IN GOD.—Let this be its soul.

“Often say this prayer with great TRUST IN GOD; for a holy trust is the soul of the great spiritual building, as also of perfection. Never be cast down, never lose heart, in the path you are treading, however frequent may be the spiritual and worldly stumbling-blocks that beset your way. Never fall away from your devout practices, nor from virtuous deeds. What is required of you is a thorough misgiving of self and of all creatures; and an unbounded trust in God, knowing that He alone can and will help you, without fail, in all your needs. Be of good cheer, therefore, in all your tribulations, temptations, persecutions, desolations, spiritual dryness, bodily ailments; and in this last case, put not your trust in human remedies, but use them as sparingly as possible. God will always help you, if you put your trust in Him. He has already warned us, saying: ‘Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage.’

“Bring home to yourself the fact that when your heavenly Spouse shall seem farthest from you, then is He highest, delighting in your sighs, your suffering and

patience ; and that when He seems most to afflict you, then does He love you best. Beware, lest you think wickedly in your heart, that He has forsaken you, and wishes to know nothing more about you : ‘ Think of the Lord in goodness.’

“ VIII. GOD’S PRESENCE.—Let this be its spur.

“ And in order to give spur to your trust, bring home to yourself THE PRESENCE OF GOD, who is with you everywhere, and at all times ; looking upon you from His throne of majesty and love. Oh ! what a safe means is here placed in your way, for speedily reaching perfection ! ‘ Walk before me, and be perfect,’ said the Lord to Abraham : and you, too, would do well often to repeat this. It is as plain as plain can be, that if you think and believe that God is at all times beside you, not only will you forsake sin altogether, but you will find yourself, as it were, compelled to do what is most perfect : viz., that which gives Him the greatest pleasure and glory. To believe God nigh and yet sin against Him, is an impossibility. Look on God as your maker, keeper, justifier, well-wisher ; thinking successively of His glory, of His love, His providence, His almighty ness, immensity, justice, mercy ; and always, in one form or another, have a memory of the Passion of Christ Jesus Our Lord.

“ IX. OBEDIENCE.—Let this be its guide.

“ But how will you find your way to perfection without a guide ? Let this be OBEDIENCE. Oh, how soon and easily you will reach your beloved Spouse,

if you but allow yourself to be led by blind obedience ! Remember that you have given up your will : that you have offered it in holocaust and placed it in the hands of your Superiors, who hold the place of God, and of whom Jesus Christ has said : ‘ He that, heareth you heareth me.’ Obey your Superiors therefore at once, blindly and cheerfully, even in the smallest things ; without scrutinising whether their behests be just, or binding upon you, or what motive prompted them. Were you thoroughly obedient, you would fulfil their every wish.

“ X. HUMILITY.—Let this be its groundwork.

“ Without humility, however, you will never allow yourself to be guided : hence, you can never reach the perfection which you desire. HUMILITY is the groundwork of the whole spiritual building, and the deeper it is laid, the greater shall be your holiness.

“ Humility consists in having a lowly opinion of self, in deeming ourselves less than our neighbours in every way, and feeling that we are deserving of all possible contempt. In order to realise this, (a) bear always your nothingness in mind ; (b) never say or do anything that may turn to your own glory or esteem ; never seek honours, nor higher offices, but accept these only when obedience bids you ; (c) do not excuse yourself when you are wrongly accused, save in cases of scandal, or when God’s greater glory is at stake ; (d) do not speak disparagingly of your sister-nuns, nor even criticise them in what they do or say, save in the case of open sin ; and even then you must bear with them, resting assured that you are more faulty than they. Do not merely tolerate insult, but make it your delight to be

despised, corrected, persecuted ; and bear all without ever uttering complaint or showing displeasure.

“ XI. THE UNCEASING PRACTICE OF VIRTUE.—Let this be its building.

“ Having laid your groundwork, you must now set about raising the building by the UNCEASING PRACTICE OF VIRTUE. Not only must you desire to acquire all the virtues, but you should look upon the day as lost in which you have not added some stone to your building. S. Bernardine tells us that he who does not strive after all the virtues will never win any. And as virtue is a cloak, woven by persevering labour, so must you fight, toil, and struggle against yourself, in order to overcome whatever stands in its way. Practise all virtues ; but at the same time single out some particular one : set it in bold relief, and bestow especial study and prayer on making it your own. I should wish you to begin with the virtue most contrary to your natural disposition and predominant passion. Never lose heart in your unrelenting struggle to acquire it ; but place full trust in God, and work with unflagging perseverance in spite of your own unworthiness—mindful only of the Grace of God.

“ XII. PRAYER.—Let this be its mainstay.

“ If, as S. Theresa tells us, the soul that forsakes prayer undermines its own salvation, independently of devils, what profit can you hope for, what holiness can you reach without its aid ? Rest assured that prayer is the beginning, the advancement, the very SOUL OF PERFECTION to which you are aspiring. Nor

will the fact of having prayed once or more suffice ; but you must go on praying steadfastly, unflinchingly, perseveringly and with unfailing confidence. Whether you draw comfort or desolation, sweetness or dryness of soul ; never forsake it on any account. A Religious should never cease praying. Besides the meditation with the community, make use of private meditation ; entertain yourself as much as you can with your Divine Spouse ; and do this amidst your every-day work, by often offering up short prayers and ejaculations to Him. Speak to Him with your heart, in praise and thanksgiving. Protest your ready will to love Him, and great sorrow for your sins. Ask Him for graces with all confidence—despite any coldness of heart which you may feel—seeking not spiritual sweetness, but God alone.

“ XIII. MORTIFICATION.—Let this be its bulwark.

“ Prayer will, however, avail you nothing unless it be accompanied by MORTIFICATION, which is the bulwark and stronghold of the whole spiritual building. Remember that you can never be a disciple of Christ, Our Saviour, unless you deny yourself : ‘ If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself.’ Self-denial is not limited to time or place—to whims or fancies ; but calls for constant opposition to all your likings, for submission to other people’s views, and especially to those of your Superiors, without ever urging any reasons on your own side. Then, as to outward mortifications, or those of the body, these consist in not being dainty with regard to the food you eat, or the clothes you wear ; whilst on the other hand it calls for the denial of the senses, especially of the eyes, which must always

FATHER BENVENUTO AND HIS SISTER MARY.

be kept downwards ; of the tongue, which must be taught to keep silence ; and of the ears, which must be closed to everything that is not for God's glory or proper to your office. Mortification also demands that you should treat your body harshly, making it suffer even when sleeping and eating and using some instrument of penance—not, however, according to your whim, but only after due leave from your confessor or Superiors.

“ XIV. FREQUENTING THE SACRAMENTS.—Let this be its means.

“ The end which you desire can never be reached but by proper means, the chief of which is the FREQUENTATION OF THE HOLY SACRAMENTS of Penance and of the Blessed Eucharist. The former you must approach according to the custom of the community, and always go to the ordinary or the extraordinary confessor as appointed. In confession you must use few words and say what you have to say quickly; speaking merely of your spiritual wants and nothing else besides. Take care not to be envious of those who stay long in the confessional, nor complain that the confessor does not make much ado about you. Oh ! what harm do not these petty jealousies occasion, and what prejudice do they not bring to the soul !

“ You must receive Holy Communion as often as you have your confessor's leave to do so, and take heed never to keep away because of scruples or doubts. These must be put aside according to the former advice of your confessor, or according to what your Superior or some other experienced nun may tell you. In order that this Divine Sacrament may help you on to perfec-

tion, you must receive Holy Communion with great faith, the highest reverence and intense love. In order to do this, look up to this act as by far the greatest, and, above all others, the most pleasing to God and profitable to your soul. Have a constant longing to receive your dear Lord, and offer Him spiritual Communion several times during each day. Pay the Blessed Sacrament frequent visits. Live ever ready to receive your Lord. Shun even the slightest venial sin.

“ As the time of your Communion draws nigh make the necessary acts—more with the heart than with the lips. After Holy Communion, adore your Divine Spouse as long as you can, and have your thoughts centred in Him. Pray much—more with the will and heart than with the tongue. S. Theresa says that this is the most fitting time to traffic in grace.

“ XV. SILENCE.—Let this be its keeper.

“ If you wish to keep from every wilful fault, you must needs have a great love of SILENCE ; for if you be most particular in this respect, Almighty God will always commune with you, and you will soon become perfect, since Our Lord assures us through S. James that : ‘ If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.’ Let this virtue be therefore most dear to you—not only at the times appointed by the Rule, but at all times, everywhere, and under whatever circumstances ; abstaining from talk, or speaking in a low voice, when obedience or charity compels you. Before uttering a word, see whether you can offer it to God—and if you cannot, forbear it and desist. Beware of worldly speech, of news-gathering, of prying into

things that concern世俗的, of talking to the confessor about the direction of other nuns, of grumbling, and mentioning even the known failings of others. On the other hand, when you yourself are at fault, be ever foremost as a self-accuser. Do not meddle, even in conversation, with the interests of the monastery, unless you be in office, or else questioned. ‘Look on yourself,’ says S. Bernardine, ‘as a stranger.’

“XVI. LOVE OF ONE’S NEIGHBOUR.—Let this be its proof.

“And since charity is the bond of perfection, you shall know that you love God when, in His Name and for His sake, you LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR also. Brotherly love is, therefore, the unfailing proof of perfection. In order, however, that this charity may be in keeping with the love you owe to God, it is necessary: (1) That in loving your neighbour you have no other end than God; (2) That you love all equally, and avoid particular affections; (3) That you deem yourself less and more faulty than others; (4) That you never feel vexed when thwarted in any way, and that you always refrain from urging reasons on your own behalf; (5) That you never lay anything to your neighbour’s charge; (6) That you make yourself in a way a servant to all, lending to every one all the help in your power, not forgetting the lay-sisters.

“XVII. DETACHMENT.—Let this be its token.

“In order to foster this real love, this true charity within your soul, you must be thoroughly

weaned from all the things of the world, and even from your own self. This complete DETACHMENT will be a sure token of perfection and of holy progress. You will find that you have already effected this by embracing a religious life, especially by the vow of Poverty, which you must keep most rigorously—not only by never disposing of anything, but by having nothing whereof to dispose; by not craving for any thing on earth, but resting content with what is given you for the time being, even though you lack something that seems necessary. In this last case you may respectfully mention what you think is wanting to the Superior. Above all, learn to mortify yourself and your likings—even your spiritual ones—for they are a great hindrance to perfection. Your Spouse demands your whole heart for Himself; and will not allow a sharer of what should be wholly His Own. He protests Himself a jealous lover.

“XVIII. REMEMBRANCE OF OUR LORD’S PASSION.—Let this be its comfort.

“ Oh ! how greatly will the MEMORY OF OUR LORD’S PASSION help you in bringing about this detachment if you often ponder on its deep Mysteries—especially in times of trouble, temptation and suffering. S. Augustine assures us that this will prove the stoutest shield and the mightiest weapon against our spiritual enemy. The crucifix is the book to keep before your eyes. In it you will learn all the virtues to be attained and practised; and by it you will be comforted in your journey to perfection.

“ You will find it a good plan to divide the chief Mysteries of the Holy Passion amongst the seven

days of the week. On Sunday contemplate the Agony in the Garden ; on Monday, the Betrayal of Jesus, His being seized, forsaken by His Apostles and brought before the Judges ; on Tuesday, think of the cruel Scourging at the Pillar ; on Wednesday, of the Crowning with Thorns ; on Thursday, of the Journey to Calvary ; on Friday, of the Crucifixion ; on Saturday, of the Burial, and of the Sorrows of Christ's most afflicted Mother—and strive to gain from this study the virtue which you have set before you. And as Mass was instituted to commemorate the Passion and great Sacrifice, daily renewed on our Altars, always assist at the august mysteries with a heart full of great thoughts inspired by Faith.

“XIX. DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.—Let this be its safeguard.

“All the Saints have been DEVOUT TO THE EVER BLESSED VIRGIN, and by this means they have attained perfection ; whence it follows that one who is truly devout to the Mother of God, may feel positively sure of becoming perfect. To the love of Our Lord’s Passion, therefore, do not fail to couple devotion to Our Lady ; from whom you have already drawn much support, even from your childhood. This devotion should grow upon you with years, and inspire you with an affectionate trust in Her patronage. You must look upon the Mother of Jesus as the best of all mothers, and strive to be like Her in all virtues, especially in that humility, modesty, obedience and long-suffering with which She bore Her sorrows.

“You must pay Her a special visit each day, beseeching Her to obtain the forgiveness of your sins, and

the gift of some particular virtue. You must keep Her Novenas by offering up a few short prayers and many acts of self-denial in Her honour; placing yourself each day under Her mantle, and committing the holy virtue of Purity to Her keeping, with these words of St. Aloysius Gonzaga: ‘Per Tuam sanctam Virginitatem, et per immaculatam Conceptionem Tuam, purissima Virgo Maria, muni cor meum et corpus meum ab omni contagione, et labe peccati. In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen’ (‘By Thy holy Virginity, and Thy Immaculate Conception, O most pure Virgin Mary, shield my heart and my body from the corrupting stain of sin. ✠ Amen’). After Jesus, love Mary above all things.

“XX. PURITY OF INTENTION.—Let this be its fulfilment.

“Furthermore, and above all, let PURITY OF INTENTION cleave to your heart. Cherish it in all your doings, and at all times. A straightforward and pure intention makes us see God’s glory and love in all things, to the extent of banishing from our thoughts, words and deeds any other end but God, and that which is pleasing to Him. Hence, let the love of God, the thought of His glory, of His presence and grace, be ever your food and your all, and you shall then be perfect. In order to attain this, accustom yourself to doing such things only as are worthy of God’s acceptance and pleasure, and out of love for Jesus Christ keep steadfast and firm to the resolutions which you have made. Who knows how many times you may have made them before? . . . Well, then! . . : Let me take for granted that you make them again—*now*,

with this method in hand. But should you fail again : Heaven forbid ! . . . And yet, . . . who knows ! Oh, God is so good in Himself, and has been so bountiful to you that He does not deserve your breaking faith with Him !

“ Bear in mind that He has made ready a great crown in heaven for those who shall be faithful to Him unto death : ‘ Esto fidelis usque ad mortem et dabo tibi coronam vitæ ’ (‘ Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life ’). ‘ Live in Jesus, and Jesus live in you.’ ”

* * * * *

Two years later Father Bambozzi wrote to his sister ; and after giving her news from home, and telling her that all the family were leading good Christian lives, he goes on to say :

“ I, dear sister, certainly wish to see you holy, and a great Saint, for such is the Will of God. S. Alphonsus Liguori tells us that the place of many good Religious in heaven shall be amongst the Seraphs. But then, my dear child, we must first of all become Seraphs crucified by love and by a thousand pains, like the one beheld by the Patriarch S. Francis. For the present I am displeased with you, because you do not see that you are full of wretchedness, and a faithless Spouse of Jesus Christ, ever fleeing from Him. Pray the Almighty to shed unceasing light on your poor soul ; and the more vividly your miseries come before you, cast yourself the more into the Hands of Jesus and Mary.

“ I do not think the discipline of iron good for you just now, so let your wish suffice ; and do not look forward to having it gratified. Use the knotted cords

when you are allowed ; but do so with moderation. Bear in mind, dear sister, that all these bodily penances are but a weak indication of the mortification of our senses, and, above all, of our will. This, indeed, should be unceasing, as it was with S. Paul.

“ Now is the time, my child, to abandon ourselves wholly to God ; to stifle all earthly cravings and regards ; to deny ourselves even in holy things ; and greatly to humble ourselves for our failings. Let us not worry ourselves about them ; but, on the contrary, live peacefully and calmly—in spite of whatsoever may happen—like the fish in an angry sea. Do you, furthermore, beg of God the forgiveness of your sins ; and begin a new life with a strong determination, by the grace of God, of never falling into sin again.

“ Then, when you can bring home to yourself the presence of God, or think of Him and of your own wretchedness, dwell on such thoughts in holy peace ; not multiplying acts and resolutions, but let these be few and fervent. In favour of this peaceful prayer forego vocal prayer and spiritual reading, since you thereby make a profitable exchange. You, of course, well understand that you are to lay aside such prayers only as are not binding upon you, and not vocal prayer altogether. Before and after Holy Communion, if you feel well disposed, say a few vocal prayers ; but, above all, gather your thoughts home, and speak with God heart to Heart.

“ I, also, dear sister, live for the most part at peace with God, and I would wish to see Him loved by all. I return a thousand wishes to your good community ; and amongst those friends of God, please tell N. N. to stifle her anxiety about the affairs of the monastery

and, in certain circumstances, to have more faith, and to live wholly in God, as otherwise she shall rue it if ever I happen to come your way. Bide with God.

“ Your wretched brother,

“ BR. BENVENUTO BAMBOZZI, M.C.,

“ Osimo, April 19, 1846.”

To be ever striving after higher graces is a bond of holy Charity, which closely unites souls : Father Benvenuto cheered his sister on to perfection ; and she, with all meekness, followed his suggestions. Who can think how great was the good-will they bore one another, and how they longed sometimes at least to speak together ! But we know for certain that Father Benvenuto never saw his sister again on earth ; having heroically broken with earthly affections, as he had so emphatically urged upon her whom he loved, and on all the other Religious under his guidance.

Being now ripe for heaven, good Dame Scholastica fell dangerously ill towards the close of October, 1865, of acute fever, which resisted medical treatment, and rendered of no avail the care of her good Sisters. Throughout her irksome illness she showed perfect resignation and unspeakable calmness. On receiving the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction, her heart was overwhelmed with joy, and effectually strengthened in life's last struggle. Calling her sisters beside her, she bequeathed to each a legacy by way of spiritual warning, according to each one's need, and begged the Lady Abbess to have the seven penitential Psalms recited by the whole sisterhood around her death-bed. The words of the Royal Psalmist were still hanging on their lips, when Dame Scholastica, in a sweet

and calm peace, breathed forth her blessed soul in the embrace of Jesus Christ on November 21st, 1865, Feast of Our Lady's Presentation.

Amongst Father Bambozzi's papers we have found the following letter from the Lady Abbess, written to him on that occasion, which we gladly reproduce for the edification of our readers :

" J. M. J. B. V E R Y R E V E R E N D F A T H E R , —

“ I write you these lines with eyes full of tears, since I have to fulfil towards you a most painful office, in announcing the death of your good sister, Dame Scholastica—my excellent sister also.

“ Attacked by a most violent fever, which she had not the strength to resist, she was, in a fortnight's time, reduced to the point of death ; and the day before yesterday, the 21st instant, she breathed forth her beautiful soul to God towards eight o'clock in the evening—strengthened by all the rites of our Holy Religion. She was then forty-seven years of age, and had been professed for twenty-one years. Oh ! what a beautiful death was hers !

“ Her thoughts and sentiments were those that have ever belonged to a true Spouse of Jesus Christ, who after having proved faithful towards Him, and sought every means to please Him during this life of trial—looks forward with joy to His coming so as to fly, in His arms, to the everlasting nuptials in heaven.

“ Before leaving us for ever, she called us to her side, and having embraced us for the last time, and begged our forgiveness of all her failings, she strove to comfort us one by one with her wise and wholesome counsels. We were all weeping—she alone.

was full of gladness. Her's was, indeed, a beautiful death!

"Our community will ever remember your happy sister as a living mirror of religious observance and of glowing love towards Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. On account of these great virtues, I do not doubt that God has already called her beloved soul to Himself; and this is the only comfort we have for so great a loss.

"I have now to pray you to break the news to your parents and family, and I will write to your brother, the Oratorian, by the present post. Accept my most respectful regards, and those of all our community, who, one and all, beg you to pray unceasingly to God that we may have a true religious spirit, and His holy love; whilst, with the deepest respect—Very Reverend Father—we beg your holy blessing.

"Your most obedient, humble servant,

"BENEDETTA FORCIELLI, ABBESS.

"Mondavio, San Rocco, November 23, 1865."

Instead of grieving over his sister's death, Father Benvenuto undoubtedly envied her lot; and rejoiced in his soul, thanking God for having at length called her to everlasting rest.

The death of the righteous is, in sooth, a mere launching into everlasting happiness, which we should long for above all things. On the tomb of the just we should rather sing a hymn of victory, to celebrate the entry of the pilgrim-soul into its land of promise.

CHAPTER XI.

HE IS CHOSEN MASTER OF NOVICES AND SENT TO
OSIMO.

FATHER BAMBOZZI was in the thirty-fifth year of his age, and twelfth of his religious profession, when the Provincial, on a visit to the convent of Fratte, selected him as master of the novices called to our Institute.

In the Life of S. Joseph of Cupertino, we read of a somewhat similar event recorded of that Saint, whilst he was living at the convent of Grotella. The Provincial in those days, being on a visit to the aforesaid cloister, recognised the saintly friar's merit on witnessing his ecstasies and raptures. He accordingly made up his mind to send him round to all the convents in the province, in order that the Religious might admire his sterling worth, and strive to draw a rich treasure of virtue from his example.

The Provincial, Dr. Camillo Archipreti, who had formerly been Father Benvenuto's Superior at Urbino, and his confessor ever since, seeing the wondrous progress he had made in virtue, and hearing of his wide-spread fame for holiness amongst all the people in the neighbourhood, determined to appoint him to the noblest of offices, in spite of the great drawback occasioned by his having hurried through his theological studies previous to Ordination.

No sooner had Father Benvenuto received the order to leave Fratte for Osimo, than he at once foresaw numberless difficulties in his future career, which his humility made him look forward to with awe. Strengthened by obedience, however, he drove these

dark forebodings from his mind, and left Fratte, to the grief of the good people of the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, bracing up for the struggle, he nobly determined to put up with any humiliations which his little knowledge might call down upon him.

From the outset of his new career, Father Benvenuto won the respect and love of all his novices by his exceeding kindness. His great aim was to perfect them in holiness, and to this end he spared neither pains nor warnings, whilst he unceasingly flashed before their eyes the glowing light of good example, and was himself ever to the fore in fulfilling all the minor duties of a novice, just as if he had been one of their body.

During the time allotted to recreation he used to take them to church that they might learn the ceremonies of the Ritual. Whilst thus engaged he willingly repeated the same thing over and over again, in his calm and peaceful way. On all Fridays and Feas-tdays throughout the year he made his novices keep at home, but on all other days he took them out for a walk. Within the town walls he exacted strict silence, but as soon as they were out in the country, they all drew around him to listen to a narrative about the Saint of the day, or to a few appropriate words on the mystery that was being celebrated.

In speaking thus to them, he always strove to set clearly before them some practical examples of virtue, and he made use of these occasions for correcting their failings indirectly; showing them by the example of the Saints how easy a thing is virtue, if one only earnestly undertakes the task of denying self. The whole time of the walk was taken up with these

conversations, for he allowed his novices to give their opinions freely, and to suggest difficulties on the various points at issue. These he would answer one after the other ; and when the little band again drew near the town they fell in two by two, and walked back to the convent in unbroken silence.

One may fancy the admiration of the young men, when on the first Thursday after his coming to the noviciate, as soon as the evening recreation was over, he said : " My dear children, Thursday is the day of Our Saviour's love, since on that day He instituted the most Blessed Sacrament ; it is also the day of His humiliations, whereon He willed to wash His Apostle's feet, who were so much less than He. On this day He sweated blood whilst praying to His Father in the Garden on our behalf ; and again on this day He was mocked, betrayed, fettered and dragged about like a malefactor. In memory of these humiliations borne by the Son of Man, and out of love towards Him, allow me to kiss the feet of each one of you."

No sooner were these words spoken, than casting himself on his knees before them, he bent down and kissed their feet, whilst they stood rooted to the ground, and utterly bewildered at the sight of their good master, dragging his way on his knees until he had humbled himself before them all. On rising to his feet he blessed them, and they all withdrew deeply impressed with what they had just witnessed. This act he repeated on every succeeding Thursday as long as he held his office.

It would be impossible to tell how these good novices watched even the last of his actions, and with what filial reverence they listened to his voice—striving

to draw good from all his words and to anticipate his every wish. Many of those who sat beside him at table saw him mingle ground ashes with his food, and pick out the pieces of stale bread. He used, moreover, to offer up the reading during dinner, as a thanksgiving after Mass, which during the last ten years of his life ended daily at noon.

Numberless were the artful tricks to which the young men resorted in order to find out fresh palpable evidence of the rigid penance and austerities which their master was reported to practise. One day in the year 1858, whilst Father Bambozzi was at meditation with his novices in the chapel, he was seen to beat his breast with his right hand under his habit, thinking he was unobserved. From that day forward the novices did their best to find out what he had been doing ; but in spite of all they could do they utterly failed, till the following incident occurred.

Amongst his novices was one who was handy at wire-working, and it was he who had previously made those iron chains wherewith the good Father used to gird his arms and loins. One day, calling this young novice aside, Father Bambozzi asked him to make him a small heart of iron-wire, with seven points turned inward. The novice made a show of not understanding how this was to be done, and asked for a model.

"Very well," he answered, and withdrawing to an alcove, he took off his habit and drew from his breast an instrument which was blood-stained, whilst the novice, who was slyly on the look out, saw him clean away the blood with a handkerchief. On coming back to the room in which the young man was waiting, he said,

"Oh, look ! I have found this one—make another like it."

Thus the novices found out that in the act they had noticed he was actually pressing the seven points into his body.

This same iron heart was found after his death,* together with fragments of a discipline of thin iron spurs or stars, besides three others made of knotted cord and three chains, with one of which he was accustomed to bind his head at night, and with the other two his arms. There were likewise found two wooden crosses eleven inches in height by seven, which he used to keep hidden under his bed-clothes, and another one ten inches by four and a half, which hung at his neck day and night. The other instruments of penance, he was in the habit of using, were thrown away by him so that they should not be found after his death.

On one occasion, two of the youths, who had to clean his room, could not withstand the temptation of curiosity, and set about turning up every nook and corner of his room to see whether he really kept instruments of penance, and if so, whether they bore traces of recent usage. Within his bed they found a cross a good yard in length, with arms in proportion, and thick ropes tied with many knots, hidden under the lower sheets. We do not know whether it was out of kindness or for the sake of a joke that they made

* Father Bambozzi was taken very suddenly and violently ill, so that he had no time to destroy all his instruments of torture, as he otherwise would undoubtedly have done. I have seen such as are left—many of them broken to pieces—as if the good Father had risen from his sick-bed, and tried to make away with the traces of his severe bodily penance. The fragments of an iron discipline—here referred to—were found hidden in a skull which he used to keep in his room.—*Translator's Note.*

his bed up for him, and hid the cross and knotted ropes under the mattress. At night, on going to rest he missed these things; and unwilling to show any sign of resentment, though feeling bound to correct curiosity on the part of his disciples, he addressed them thus, on the morrow, when they were all together in class : “Once upon a time a swallow had, by dint of repeated journeys, made up her nest very cosily. A bold, prying cat, thinking, perhaps, to catch the swallow in her nest, darted up and set to work spoiling it with its claws. The swallow came back, and finding her nest in this state, quietly set to work and made it up anew. What do you say to this? Shall the cat come and spoil it again? Were it to be so, would it not deserve to be well punished? . . .” He paused a moment—the guilty ones understood at once whither the parable was pointed, and never afterwards ventured to tamper with his affairs. After this he quietly began his lecture, as if nothing at all had happened.

Amongst the young men whom he found, on undertaking the office of novice-master, was a certain Brother Aurelius Armini, who subsequently graduated as Doctor in Divinity, and died at an early age with the fame of sanctity. This youth showed such signs of a virtuous disposition, that Father Bambozzi made it his special study to guide him in the path of self-denial. Brother Aurelius was at the time of which we are speaking Dean of novices, and though no noticeable fault could be detected in him, still his master feared that he might some day be tempted to vanity on account of the honour and esteem shown him by his fellows, and determined to put his virtue to

a public and crucial test. Taking the occasion, therefore, of a slight breach of the rule of silence on the part of the young novice, he called him up, rebuked him sharply for the fault, and he condemned him to take the cross on his back, as was usually done for the Way of the Cross, and to kiss the feet of each of the novices, asking forgiveness for the scandal given. The novice, without a word in reply, rose at once and readily did as he had been bidden—leaving his fellow-novices in admiration, and his master heartily thanking the Almighty for this signal victory won over self-love.

One of his novices, now a Doctor in Divinity, to whom we wrote for information, answers, under date of the 16th April, 1875, as follows: “To the details which I know you to have already received, I can add, that Father Benvenuto nightly practised the devotion of the Way of the Cross, took the corded discipline before midnight, and scourged himself with one made of small iron stars. To all this I can bear witness, because, as a novice, I had a room contiguous to his, and I listened and heard all that went on in his room. Moreover, I myself have found his underclothing soaked with blood in another room, where he often withdrew to take the discipline, so that we should not hear the noise.”

All his former novices speak in the highest terms of the good Father’s abiding spirit of prayer, intense devotion, sweet disposition, exceeding charity and many other noble gifts, which the reader will find wonderfully developed in his latter life.

Some of Father Benvenuto’s Superiors—not because they doubted his virtue, but rather with a view of proving and ascertaining the degree of his perfections,

and for the edification of the other members of the community—began to put his spiritual progress to the test at first in private, later on even in public ; but they found him at all times strong in his holy determinations, humble, meek and obedient.

One day, whilst he was in the chapel giving a course of exercises for the approaching profession of some novices, the bell was heard ringing, and the Superior bade the novices open the door. He walked in, and seeing Father Benvenuto preaching in the chapel, reproached him thus before all the young men : “ What business have you to be preaching up there, you who know nothing and can neither speak nor keep silence ? Do you not see that, out of sheer ignorance, you are running a risk of uttering things that might scandalise these poor youths ? Come down from there, and leave off preaching, as you understand nothing about it.” He then went away in seeming anger and indignation. Father Benvenuto rose at once from his place, genuflected, kissed the ground, and quietly telling his novices to go back to their cells, he withdrew smilingly to his own.

We leave our readers to imagine the effect produced on the novices, on witnessing their master’s heroic humility under such trying treatment.

On another occasion a certain country parish Priest came to him for confession, and a good while after, as F. Bambozzi was going into choir for Tierce, he saw this same Priest chatting with some people. In passing by he said gently to him : “ Shepherd, Shepherd ! your flock calls you ; why do you not go back to the fold ? ” . . . One of the bystanders taking offence at this, rudely retorted : “ Ignoramus that you are ; why

are you not tending your own herd, instead of minding other people's? Go, and mind your own business." And away he went, saying: "You are quite right, quite right; *Viva Maria!*" and he joined the community in giving praise to God.

If a self-denying Religious, such as was Father Benvenuto, can suffer any grief, it is certainly by being obliged to abstain from administering the Sacraments, visiting the sick and consoling the afflicted and dying; but he bowed in obedience to the Rule, which forbids such work to novice-masters, and limits their duty to the careful training of their disciples. During his last few years of office he was on rare occasions allowed to do some slight work of active ministry; but at other times he was night and day with his novices, correcting their faults in all charity, pointing out to them the way to perfection, and urging them above all to be entirely detached from all affection to the world. He took all possible care of these young souls, giving his whole mind to their spiritual welfare; and when he considered that his own capacities failed him, he found means to engage another Religious, who enjoyed his special confidence, to make good his shortcomings.

The virtue of discretion, so necessary to every state, and which, according to the Holy Abbot S. Anthony, is generally the least easy to practise, proved a true guide to Father Benvenuto, and tempered his zeal in the direction of his small flock. Few were the things which he exacted from his novices; but these were sound and necessary. He well knew how to cool down that first fervour which so readily rises in young men, and urges them to undertake grievous bodily

penance. He never allowed them the use of iron chains but for a very short time indeed, and he limited their use of the corded discipline to the time allotted to saying one short psalm. What he aimed at, above all, was making them deny their own will, without which all outward acts of penance and self-denial avail not in spiritual life, and may even, at times, prove hurtful to the soul. He never allowed his younger novices to deprive themselves of necessary food, nor to undertake strict fasts; but he would himself, on the contrary, take bread to them on fast-days, so that they might not feel any sad effects from exhaustion.

Whenever one of his novices happened to fall ill, Father Benvenuto at once gave him all his thoughts, faithfully carrying out the physician's prescriptions, and visiting the patient frequently night and day. The care, however, which he lavished on the training of their souls is simply beyond telling; and so wondrous were its effects, that many of the Fathers held it to be of sovereign efficacy.

Simplicity of judgment and an ingenuous disposition, be they shortcomings or not in a master of novices, were striking features in Father Benvenuto's character. His was a holy, simple and frank disposition. At times, perhaps, he erred in judgment, and in one or two cases, advantage was taken of his good-heartedness by novices making a show of piety and counterfeiting the very virtues which they entirely lacked. Whenever such a case of duplicity came to his knowledge he corrected it in all charity, and only referred the matter to the higher Superiors when all his efforts had failed.

There was one unfortunate novice who simulated

virtue of the very highest order so perfectly, that he deceived not only his unsuspecting master, but many other experienced persons. The Superiors before whom this matter was brought, removed the youth from under Father Benvenuto's care and sent him elsewhere. This, however, proved of no avail; for he at once sounded the dispositions of his new Superiors, deluding them so far as to be admitted to profession. It was only after many warnings from God that he confessed his hypocrisy and died soon afterwards forgiven by those whom he had wronged.

Father Bambozzi was deeply humbled by this young man's sad behaviour, so that whenever the subject was mentioned, all he could do was to say meekly, though feelingly: "It is well, O Lord, that Thou shouldst thus have humbled me. Praised be Thou for evermore!" He had to bear with many hard and harsh taunts on this account, but he never spoke a word in self-defence, nor uttered complaint against others; and always repeated: "I have much cause for humiliation. Let us bless God."

This case was a source of great distress to our good Father; but, on the other hand, he was amply rewarded by the lives of so many of his children, who became worthy, earnest Religious; ever-mindful of his stern and unflinching maxims, and full of his seraphic spirit. "A wise son," says the Holy Ghost in the Book of Proverbs, "maketh his father joyful;" and it is certainly an unspeakable pleasure for a Christian to know that he has not cast good seed on barren rocks, but in a rich field, yielding a good and plentiful harvest. The great number of his pupils, who distinguished themselves by piety, exemplary virtues

and holy zeal for souls, bear living witness of his merit and of his gentle humility. There is no fear of their reproaching Father Benvenuto for his simplicity, no more than any one will ever dare impute the treachery of Judas to the goodness of our loving Saviour.

CHAPTER XII.

INNER LIFE OF FATHER BENVENUTO FROM HIS THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR.

HAVING related in the foregoing chapter how Father Bambozzi trained his novices to the attainment of a truly religious spirit, we shall now lay before our readers a lifelike picture of the good Priest himself.

Shortly after the publication of the first edition of this work, in 1876, a manuscript was found amongst his Director's papers in which is minutely described the purport of his daily life. The Director he had chosen, on coming to Osimo in 1844,* seeing the saintly spirit which actuated Father Bambozzi, and unwilling to act otherwise than with forethought in so important a matter, bade him set down minutely in writing the way in which he spent the hours of the day. Father Bambozzi lost no time in complying, and in a few days handed in a small manuscript, which contains many precious records of his inner life. His simple words reveal how pleasing to God was the soul which He Himself had chosen and endowed with so many glorious gifts. Let his own words show the

* Father Nicholas Treggiari, the author of this work, was Father Bambozzi's confessor from 1844 till the latter's death in 1875.—*Translator's note.*

world how grand a thing is holiness, and serve as a guide more especially to Priests and Religious.

“ Whenever I awake at night, provided my mind does not instantly turn to some act of holy contemplation, I make unceasing inward acts of love, praise and glory to the Almighty, saying: ‘ Glory to God Almighty, to the Great King, to the Most High; to Him be glory for evermore. Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: to Mary and all the Saints in heaven, glory everlasting.’ At the time for rising I usually find myself making acts of this kind. If I find it too early or otherwise inconvenient, I am content that my body be mortified by this delay; and if this is not enough, I usually make it suffer more by giving myself the discipline. If the hour seems to me later than that appointed for my getting up, I make great acts of humiliation, resignation and love to Almighty God, more intensely than ever, so as to make up for lost time.

“ Nevertheless, in order not to stray from the wonted practice of the Church, I begin by making the sign of the Cross; then I recite slowly the acts of Faith, Hope, Charity and Contrition; then the Hail Mary thrice in honour of Our Lady; one Our Father, and Hail Mary to my Angel Guardian, the same to the Saint whose name I bear, the same again to my holy Patrons; and afterwards the prayers: ‘ Eternal Father, I offer Thee,’ etc. If I have much time to spare I repeat these short prayers, or the usual outpourings of the heart; or again I strive to be wholly rapt in God.

“ With my thoughts intent on the Passion and Death of Our Saviour, I take the discipline; and prostrate

on the ground I adore and give thanks to the Most Holy Trinity, thrice kissing the ground and saying the prayer, ‘Behold me, O my beloved and good Jesus,’ which ends with, ‘they pierced my hands and my feet, and have numbered all my bones.’ Whilst disciplining myself I recite the ‘Miserere,’ ‘Deus Misereatur nostri,’ ‘De Profundis;’ then the prayer ‘A fulgure et tempestate,’ up to the fourth verse, as is said in blessing the fields, ‘Ut Ecclesiam Tuam Sanctam,’ etc., ‘Ut regibus et principibus Christianis pacem,’ etc., ‘Ut omnibus fidelibus defunctis,’ etc.; then the ‘Kyrie Eleison,’ as is said in the Mass, ‘Christus factus est pro nobis obediens,’ etc., with the verse, ‘Te ergo quæsumus,’ then the ‘Respice,’ and ‘Sancta Maria succurre,’ with their proper prayer.

“I then say the Angelus, if it be about the hour of daybreak, and some other prayer, according to the day, or any special want I may feel.

“On *Monday*, as being in a special way dedicated to the Souls in Purgatory, I say three times, “Ut omnibus fidelibus defunctis requiem eternam,” etc.: then some praises to all the choirs of Angels, with befitting prayers, as so many mediators on behalf of these dear Souls, and to honour my Creator.

“On *Tuesday*, I recite prayers and praises to S. Anthony of Padua; I make some offering to the Most Precious Blood of Jesus; and give praise to the Blessed Sacrament.

“On *Wednesday*, I offer prayers to S. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and to the Patriarch S. Francis, to whom conjointly, I dedicate this day, and from whom I hope great things: from S. Francis because I am a child of his, and because he was a faithful fol-

lower of Jesus Christ : from S. Joseph because he was the reputed father of Jesus, and is a most faithful guardian of us all, and of me especially, as for a long time I frequently see him beside me. Oh ! glorious Saint, now I begin to love thee much, and would wish to see thee loved by all !

“ On *Thursday*, I offer some praises and earnest prayers to the Blessed Sacrament—my only Good and my All to me. Each Thursday throughout the year has now become a day of great remembrance and fresh love for me.

“ On *Friday*, disciplining myself with the small stars, I leave out the psalm, ‘Deus misereatur,’ and make in its stead several offerings of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus. I likewise leave out the ‘Salve Regina’ from Our Lady’s prayers, and substitute the greater part of the ‘Stabat Mater.’ This day, on which Jesus and Mary suffered so much, is the one which comforts me most in this vale of tears ; and makes me hope great things for the Church, Spouse of Jesus Christ ; giving me full trust that the almost incurable wounds of my poor soul may be healed, and that I may live and die within the wounded Heart of my sweet Jesus, borne up and shielded by the trans-fixed Heart of Mary.

“ On *Saturday*, I offer some prayers and great praise to Our Lady, on whom I look as my sweet support and life. On this day I also call to mind the great work of our Creation, which ever seems new to me ; and I keep the day as a preparation, in figure as in reality, of the Sunday.

“ On *Sunday*, I make some acts of praise and prayer befitting the day, which is to me the day of all days ;

and only in heaven shall we realise something of its greatness. After taking the discipline, I kiss the ground three times, saying a Pater and Ave for all the wants of Holy Mother Church. Then beginning my more formal prayers, I first of all make the sign of the Cross thrice, saying each time, 'Blessed be the Most Holy Trinity, now and for evermore. Amen.'

"Forthwith, in all humility, steeped as it were in the Blood of my Jesus, and putting my whole trust in Him, I examine my poor conscience with a view of cleansing, blotting out and purging away all the sins of which I find myself guilty, since the foregoing night and my last confession. Then for my numberless failings, boundless ingratitude and wretchedness, I offer this Most Precious Blood and the infinite merits of Jesus, my beloved Redeemer, to whom I owe it that I am still alive, and not long since cast into the direst depths of Hell.

"I then make one of the seven adorations which I am wont to offer up every day, to give renewed thanks to God, to obtain the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and certain other spiritual wants. Bending my knee, and prostrating myself for the first time, I say: 'I adore Thee, O boundless ocean, O Father, God Eternal: behold my life's blood ready to bear witness to Thee; and although I am unworthy that Thou shouldst even look upon me, still I hope to do Thy Most Holy Will in all things.' Bowing down a second time, I say: 'I adore Thee, Eternal Word, my God: behold my blood and my life ready to bear witness to what Thou truly art; and although I know myself to be unworthy of even one look from Thee, yet do Thou but help me, and I will do Thy Most Holy Will in all

things.' Again, falling down a third time, I say : 'I adore Thee, O God, Eternal Spirit : behold my life and my blood are ready to bear witness to Thee ; and though, in truth, I am unworthy that Thou shouldst allow me to live, nevertheless, in Thy boundless Goodness, grant that I may get to love Thee without bounds, as Thou deservest and wildest.

"In order to adore and show my faith in the Word made Flesh—true God and true Man—I make Him an offering of my life's blood as He did for me ; and, seeing my unworthiness and utter nothingness, falling lowly down, I kiss the ground five times in the sign of the Cross, as if I were kissing the Five Sacred Wounds received on Calvary. Then I say five 'Gloria Patri' to the Eternal Father, so as through each Wound to give worthy praise to the Most Holy Trinity. With a view also of honouring, in some measure, the whole Court of heaven by these most loving Wounds, I say five times over : 'I praise Thee, holy Mary, Mother of God, and you also, holy Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels.'

"Prostrate anew on the ground, I kiss it three times in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, paying homage to the Mystery of the day, to my patron Saint for the year, to S. Benvenuto, to the King of Heaven and all His Saints for evermore. To this end I say three times: 'I praise you, Saints John and Benvenuto, and Thee, O King of Heaven, with all Thy Saints now and for evermore.'

"Here I offer my whole self—as I should even a hundred million lives, if they were mine—to the Most Holy Trinity. Then looking on myself as being wholly

God's, I place myself in the presence of the Three Divine Persons—supported by Jesus and Mary ; with S. Joseph, S. Francis, SS. Peter and Paul, all my other Advocates and all the Blessed in heaven around me. Furthermore, humbling myself, so to speak, under all the damned in hell, on account of my sins—dead to self, and wholly lost in my Spouse Jesus—and trusting in all the heavenly hosts. I renew my holy Profession, saying : “ O Lord, Most High, my God, my All ! With all-purity, love and singleness of heart, I renew the great sacrifice of my life, already made by me in the vows of a religious vocation. I mean to renew this holy Profession now, and as often as I shall draw breath during this day and my whole life ; and I intend fulfilling my pledges with that thoroughness of will, which actuated so many Saints and especially my holy Father S. Francis. I even, O my God, unite this act with the works of my Redeemer, and intend to offer it to Thee in union, and with that perfection (as far as in me lies) with which the Incarnate Word directed His Works, whilst on earth, to Thee, His Heavenly Father. Hence, O my God, do I consecrate to Jesus all my thoughts, words, and works, beseeching Him always and unceasingly for Grace, that I may fulfil His Holy Will—for which end He has created me, adopted me, and called me to holy Religion. Amen.

“ With the all-powerful help of God, I place my utter nothingness before my eyes, and dive into the depths of my overwhelming wretchedness, ingratitude, and sinfulness ; I acknowledge myself more wicked than all the fiends in hell—than all men who have ever been, or ever shall be, on this earth ; and

I own myself utterly unworthy of even making this act.

“ Raising my thoughts to the highest pinnacle of heaven, I rejoice now and for evermore that Thou, O my God, art the Great, Omnipotent, Incomprehensible One. I rejoice unceasingly in Thy boundless Perfections. I rejoice that all creatures both in heaven and earth give Thee glory—that they praise and magnify Thee. I rejoice, moreover, that though they do their utmost, yet that they do nothing in comparison to Thy deserts. I rejoice, and—though such is impossible—I would fain adequately rejoice in the attributes of Thy infinite Majesty.

“ Acknowledging Thee to be the Supreme Good, and in Thyself worthy of all love, I offer Thee my heart without reserve, and I wish to love Thee with all that perfection of love, which all creatures on earth and all the Blessed in heaven, have ever borne Thee, bear Thee still, and ever shall bear Thee. Again I would wish, were it possible, to love Thee with all that Divine Perfection which Thou hast ever loved, still lovest, and ever shall love in Thyself; and I thank Thy Divine Majesty that by loving Thyself, Thou makest good the debt of love we owe Thee. Amen.

“ Adoring anew the Most Holy Trinity, I mourn for all my sins as much as men on earth have mourned, or ever will mourn for them; nay, I would wish to deplore them with all the fulness and depth of Mary’s grief, and even that of the Word made Man.

“ Oh, would that I were now able to offer up a thousand lives at every moment, in order to give some shadow of satisfaction and thanks for the boundless Mercy of God, who has forborne casting me into the

deepest depths of hell, as He might have done ! O God Almighty ! since I have nothing of my own to give Thee save filth and wretchedness, let me offer Thee all Thine own Divine Perfections, all the boundless merits of Jesus, of Mary, and of all Thy Elect. Yea, all these do I offer Thee !

“ Having resigned myself to God’s Most Holy Will (which I wish for my only rule) I now desire, O Eternal Goodness ! to suffer and to do for love of Thee, all that has been suffered and performed, or ever shall be borne and done by all creatures, to Thy honour and glory. My desire is ever, and especially this day, to be able to love, magnify, exalt and honour Thee as do all creatures, as do the throngs of the Blessed in heaven ; and with them to rejoice in the supreme and eternal love which Thou bearest Thyself.

“ Here pouring out my heart in the presence of God, I recite with the greatest fervour and humility the ‘Veni Creator Spiritus,’ with appropriate verses and prayers, to the Holy Ghost, to Our Lady, to the Patriarch S. Francis and other Saints, with these intentions, viz., that the whole earth be filled by the Holy Spirit, and especially my poor soul, so that I may live and work throughout my whole life—and especially this day—enkindled by this Divine Fire : that I may rise from the meditation I am about to make, altogether a new man, according to Jesus Christ: and lastly, that I may receive and administer the Holy Sacraments throughout the day with the all-pure and perfect intention with which all holy Priests may have received and administered them, and which actuated Our Saviour Jesus Christ, when He Himself instituted them.

" How sad it is, that by the reflected light from the Holy Ghost I should seem to see the whole world ablaze with the brightness of his Heavenly Gifts—a thousand times stronger than the sun's rays at noon-tide—and yet behold how men deliberately close their eyes to it ! Oh what wretched sinfulness in the world ! and, indeed, who could ever conceive how deep is the wretchedness of my own poor soul !

" Guardian Angel, dear S. Benvenuto, sweet S. John, my beloved protector S. Francis, my dear father S. Joseph ; ye who are continually watching over me, and you, too, my holy Patrons, do make me holy as much as Jesus and Mary wish me to be, and help me to work for the whole Church militant and suffering.

" But in order the better to know what I really am, and effectually realise my ardent wishes, help me, dear Saints, to raise up my mind and beg help of the whole Court of heaven.

" Blessed Angels and all ye happy Saints, to you be praise and glory. Hasten to offer up the Precious Blood of Jesus to the Most Holy Trinity in order to blot out my sins, those of the whole world, and to free all Souls from purgatory, that all the members of the Church may live united to her Spouse, Jesus. In particular, obtain for me the virtue of humility as deeply rooted as Jesus and Mary wish to see it in me ; and I, acknowledging myself as the most wretched of all those redeemed by the Word, place myself under the feet of all the devils in hell, and beseech you to obtain an overflowing measure of this fair virtue in an especial manner for the Church, Spouse of Jesus Christ, for the Pope, for Pastors, for persons in Religion, for all those who are vowed to God and for all men of

good will. Much more do I pray you on behalf of my brethren in Religion, my relations, dependents, spiritual children, all those who recommend themselves to me, and those in whose favour I am this day about to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice.

Using the same form of prayer, the holy man beseeches the Archangels for purity; the Principalities for meekness and obedience; the Powers for self-denial, the Virtues for constancy, fortitude and perseverance; the Dominations for a mastery over the passions; the Thrones for devotion to the Mother of God; the Cherubim for love of the Son of Man; the Seraphim for the supreme love due to the Most Holy Trinity—not only on his own behalf, but for all the redeemed of Christ. He then pours forth his heart in earnest love, praise and thanksgiving; spending one hour, and sometimes two, between these holy practices and mental prayer.

He then proceeds as follows :

“ Leaving the noviciate by myself, before choir-time, I kiss the cross, and then the ground three times before the Superior’s door, in token of reverence.

“ Whenever I walk about the convent or any other place, provided I be not engaged in vocal prayer or in conversation with others, I seek to give boundless praise and glory to God by the very act; as though I were treading on so many chords or musical instruments, in honour of the Great King. I do this the more willingly when I can run a little or go upstairs, and I likewise give praise in the same spirit when using my hands.

“ From the community meditation I usually draw but little good, and consequently make boundless acts of

resignation, praise, glory and love. Whenever I go into church, I strive to offer most fervent acts ; and if I be there alone—or almost so—I prostrate and kiss the ground, or else offer up some of my wonted adorations such as the prayers, ‘Behold O my most loving,’ ‘Eternal Father,’ ‘Bless me, dear Mother,’ etc.

“If I have to wait for the Office in choir, I make great inward acts, and afterwards strive to say the Divine Office perfectly—praising God with the same intentions as all who have gone before us, especially Jesus and Mary. When I find myself remiss in saying the Office—as most frequently happens—I make acts of resignation, and determine to say the remainder better, even if I have reached close upon the last word. I do my utmost to give myself wholly to God, in whatever circumstances I may be placed.

“If I have occasion to hear confessions, I endeavour to make many profitable acts of patience, resignation, and other virtues, according to the state of my soul and the discomforts which one has to endure in that holy work. Whilst rousing penitents to sorrow, I strive to rouse myself likewise.

“When I have occasion for assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, I seem to be in Paradise ; and I endeavour to accomplish great things with the Spotless Victim for the whole Church militant, suffering and triumphant. And though I know full well that of myself I can do nothing ; still my loving Spouse Jesus, who offers Himself on the Altar will do all, and infinitely more than ever I intend to do.

“The Blessed Sacrament is the One thing that keeps me happy in this world : hence my desire to be as near as I can to It. I, at least, never neglect my

daily visit, during which I make acts of love without any limits—usually repeating part of those I make in the morning—and at the same time asking the intercession of the Angelic choirs. When either genuflecting or offering acts of adoration in my own room, I always turn towards the Blessed Sacrament—since It is my only sanctuary. If I chance to enter a church from which the Blessed Sacrament has been removed, I seem to miss everything; although I prize each holy picture and the relics of a Saint far above all the gold in the world.

“When the first attendance in Choir is over, I make another half hour’s meditation, if I am able; but if the call of charity or any other cause hinders me, I willingly conform to circumstances. As a rule, I endeavour to set apart fixed times for my spiritual wants; nevertheless, when I happen to be interrupted or called away from them, I make a thousand acts of resignation, contentment, etc.—however vexed I may feel in my baser self—especially when interrupted during such prayers as please me most.

“After this I take care to read a little, to look after the novices, or do something else before school-time, which lasts an hour and a half. In these sundry occupations I likewise strive to offer my wonted acts of love, praise, and glory to God—although I am apt very easily to overlook them, especially whilst giving the class. Should I have any time on my hands after class, previous to the second call to Choir, I resume my acts of love and praise to God with fervour; and either study or work to some good purpose.

“As the bell rings for Tierce, I go to Choir with great pleasure and holy fear, full of the thought that

it was at this hour that the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles, and that although the Almighty is ever ready throughout the whole day with boundless oceans of Grace, wherewith to fill the whole world, still at this hour, more than at all others, He, as it were, forces us plentifully to receive it. This lesson is taught us by the day itself, which at this hour shines its brightest ; by Holy Writ, which records the greatest mysteries and wonders as having been wrought at this time ; and by the Church in her prayers and solemnities. As High Mass is sung during the lesser hours, these two solemn Offices are to me of such moment, and bring me such exceeding consolation, that I know not how God could have found greater inducements to fire me with love, even were I harder than adamant.

“ During High Mass I say a small chaplet of thirty-three ejaculations ; to wit : ‘ My Jesus, mercy ; Jesus and Mary, hear me,’ etc. ; and, for my special wants, another crown of thirty-three ‘ Gloria Patri,’ in memory of the years which my Spouse Jesus spent in this life. For the rest I follow the several parts of the Mass, especially the Gospel. I also glance at the life of the Saint, who is commemorated ; and say any little prayer that may suggest itself. According to the light which our Blessed Lord gives me, I strive to steep my mind in the grandeur of the Sacrifice, by making boundless acts of love, glory, etc., especially from the time of the Elevation up to the Communion. To this end I give thanks even with my hands, and every other means in my power, without, however, drawing notice on myself ; and whilst the Priest communicates, I endeavour to make a spiritual thanksgiving.

"As a rule, I look upon my morning exercise as supplying in some way my preparation for Mass, though I sometimes go over it again, *mutatis mutandis*, and I invariably make acts of the deepest humility and of exceeding trust in all the Saints, who are ready to supply for my shortcomings. Above all, I endeavour to be overwhelmed at the thought of my utter nothingness, and to put my whole trust in the boundless greatness of God, who is my beginning, my life, my heart, and much more than I can tell. If I have another chance of hearing Mass, as usually happens, I steep my whole being in the mystery which is taking place; and in doing so I seem to be able to desire nothing better to my purpose. If I have in mind some good thought of Jesus and Mary, I dwell wholly on it. In making my intention, I pray Jesus to make me celebrate the Holy Sacrifice with the same purity, perfection, holiness and intention as all good Priests have ever cherished, and which actuated our Lord Himself when He instituted it.

"Before vesting, if I find myself alone, I strive to give praise and honour to God with my whole being, by offering it wholly to His love and service. When I vest in company with others, I offer up my wonted acts of love; and I proceed to the Altar, reciting some verses of the 'Miserere,' with all my thoughts bent on Calvary, offering great acts of love, of renewal of life and other appropriate prayers, according as circumstances may suggest. I now endeavour to celebrate in perfect conformity with the spirit of holy Mother Church; and though I am aware that I do nothing well—whilst the weight of my misdeeds overwhelms me—still without losing

heart I continue making great inward acts of sorrow and love, according to the different parts of the Mass; beseeching Jesus and all the Saints in heaven to supply for all that is wanting in me. At the 'Memento' I set before my mind all my acts throughout the day, and call to mind many persons who often present themselves vividly before me. At the moment of Consecration I would fain proceed with all the perfection which Jesus Christ Himself had, and so many holy Priests have longed to imitate. Adoring my God with most intense love, even as Mary did, *quem genuit adoravit*, and offering the spotless Victim of our Ransom in order to give fitting glory to the Most Holy Trinity—with a view of sanctifying the whole Church militant and suffering, as much as Jesus Himself desires—I give myself entirely up to this Divine Victim, so that He may supply all my deficiencies. Until the Communion, besides the thoughts which the actions naturally suggest, I generally experience feelings of overwhelming awe and wonder, especially when I touch the Divine Body of my Spouse Jesus. During Holy Communion I strive, as it were, to renew all the acts of love, praise, resignation and prayer, that I may make throughout the whole day and year. I end my Mass in perfect union with my Saviour, and petition Him as earnestly as possible for the welfare of my soul. After Mass I recite the 'Te Deum,' 'Magnificat,' 'Nunc Dimitis,' until I have taken off the sacred vestments. Then, of the time that I have to myself, I offer the best portion in acts of glory, love and prayer. To this end, uplifting my hands, and centring my thoughts on the grandeur of heaven, I unite myself to all the blessed

Spirits, and pray them to make good my shortcomings, as far as is possible. Then I appeal to each of the Angelic Choirs, one by one, as on awaking. Before ending my thanksgiving—or later on if I am called away to any of the community acts—I say five Paters and Aves, with the prayers, ‘Behold me, O most loving Jesus,’ ‘Eternal Father,’ ‘Bless me, sweet Mother,’ or such others as circumstances may suggest.

“If it now happens to be the dinner hour, I go to the refectory, making acts of Divine praise : if, on the other hand, I am free, I offer up one of the seven aforesaid adorations, the second of my three usual prayers to my Holy Protector and patron Saint, then various acts of humility and mortification, and finally, I go to the refectory making fervent acts of love and devotion. After grace has been said, I sit down, making my habitual inward acts, and the outward ones also when I can without drawing notice on me. On the sign being given for beginning dinner, if I happen to have said Mass only a short time before, I wait as long as obedience allows in thanksgiving. If reading be going on, I listen to it, though my mind keeps fixed on God. For the rest, I look on myself as unworthy of the food set before me ; I think of so many others who, though much better than myself, are faring far worse, and even suffering the pangs of hunger ; and that I ought to deem it a favour to be allowed to pick up the crumbs fallen to the ground. Out of obedience I share the common meal, without ceasing my accustomed acts of praise and thanksgiving ; and I feel pleased if there be anything unsavoury set before me, in which case the more nauseous it is the more I like it.

“ During the meal, I strive to make some acts of virtue pleasing to my Saviour, whom we can glorify even in our most material actions, if we perform them with a good intention ; and although when taking any kind of savoury food these pious practices often escape me, still, as soon as I become aware of their omission, I begin afresh in peace, and hold myself indebted to God if He helps me to persevere in them. In the act of drinking, I strive to call back some remembrance of my Redeemer, some thought of Grace, and of Purgatory. When I have done my meal I resume my usual praises with renewed earnestness and fervour.

“ On leaving the refectory after grace has been said, I try as far as I am able to continue these acts of love and praise up to the time of my making a second thanksgiving with the novices ; after which, I withdraw to my cell, and offer another of the seven usual adorations along with certain prayers. If I have a chance of walking up and down the cloisters for a short while, I make my habitual acts of praise to my good Saviour, and perform some manual labour when I can—failing which, I set about doing my ordinary duties or any other useful act. During recreation-time, I do my best to turn the conversation on some devout or instructive subject, as otherwise I feel no little pain at having to stay, though the thought of the duty of obedience reconciles me.

“ When recreation is over, if no duty calls me away, and I am free to withdraw for a while, I find myself at once in peaceful quiet with God ; and after I have gone through some of my devotional practices for the day, I sit down to rest my body, and remain in the peaceful contemplation of God, according to the train

of thoughts passing through my mind. When circumstances allow it, I also try to sleep a little, for I find that if I can do so for only five minutes, I derive great benefit in what I have afterwards to perform.

“On awaking, I either read some devout book or else study for my novices’ instruction. Should I have no other spare time for mental prayer, I now at least devote a short time to it, provided that I have no further pressing business on hand. At the call of the novices for prayer I join them, unless I have some urgent matter to attend to.

“At the Vesper hour I obey the call most promptly and willingly. In the Vesper service itself I find an idea which, to my mind, is very beautiful: the five psalms commemorate the Five Wounds of our dear Redeemer, whilst the ‘Magnificat’ gives utterance to the most sublime and memorable canticle which I could ever desire in honour of the Mother of God. Compline also comes forcibly home to me, on account of its earnest prayers, of the courage it instils, and of the boundless promises of God it showers upon us. When this service is over, I pay my visit to my heart’s Love—the Blessed Sacrament.

“On the days for taking the young men out for a walk, after obtaining the blessing, I go willingly with them at the appointed hour. As long as I keep them in silence I say the mysteries of the living Rosary, ending with fervent prayers for the Pope, the whole Church, and especially for all my fifteen companions of the Rosary, whom I seem to see united to God in this devotion. If I have not been to Rosary in choir—as usually happens—I continue with the Litany of our Lady, followed by the ‘Miserere’ and the ‘De

Profoundis.' For the rest, I offer my wonted praises during the walk. When silence-time is over, I allow the novices to talk amongst themselves in a becoming way ; and I discourse with some of them on holy or instructive subjects. If any of them ask me questions, I gladly give my answer ; and when I come across some fact or word of advice which I consider good for them all to hear, I beg them to listen to me for a while, and I afterwards leave them again to their freedom. When the recreation-time is somewhat longer than usual, I make them all keep silence on other subjects for half an hour or more, and begin talking on some historical or instructive topic. I suggest difficulties, and call upon one of them to give his opinion on the subject to the best of his abilities. As we near the town I make them all keep strict silence, and I, for my own part, resume my usual devotions during the rest of the way, or else I think on the matter which has just been discussed. On reaching the convent, when I can be alone, I find it very easy to rest my thoughts on God ; and I take care to make one of my seven acts of adoration and say the 'Hail Mary.' Then, if I have nothing special to do, such as saying prayers with the novices, or if I have had no time for meditation in the early part of the day, I now, after invoking the Holy Ghost, make a further meditation, lasting about three-quarters of an hour, according as I feel disposed and circumstances allow me. After this I attend to other small matters connected with the novices, such as preparing matter for their instruction and the like.

" At the sound of the supper-bell I offer up another of the seven adorations, I make acts of humility and

mortification, and say the chaplet of our Lady's Immaculate Conception.

"After grace, I sit down to table as in the day-time ; but, with God's help, I find it much easier to recollect my thoughts, and to make great acts of love to my Jesus and the whole court of heaven, because the meal is more stinted and simple. Oh, would that I could live as the hermits of old. What great advantage would not my poor soul derive from this ! But I hold the Will of my Jesus dearer at heart than all personal advantages. After the usual thanksgiving I make another in private with the novices ; and if I can have the lay-novices apart, I do my best to instruct them during the time at my disposal ; otherwise, I prepare for my own confession. In making my examination of conscience, I strive to lose myself as much as I can in God ; for although I am always present at the examination in community, yet, in practice, I find that all the little care which I take in searching my conscience proves fruitless ; seeing which, I spend this time also in giving praise, and in begging a thousand pardons of God, as I likewise often do during the course of the day. When I fall into any considerable fault, I at once seek my confessor to accuse myself of it ; and in cases of doubt I take note of the circumstances so as to mention them likewise, as far as my memory serves me. True it is that during certain days, and even weeks, in which I am overflowing with joy and filled with spiritual consolations, I seem to see nothing of my wretchedness ; still, even at these times, when perhaps I am least thinking of my worthlessness, I discover some fault in myself, and, indeed, behold flaws in every one of my actions. At other times,

when looking over my life in general—but more particularly when searching into my acts one by one—I see these faults of mine pouring down like drops of rain, and boundless as an ocean. I see these things most clearly by the light of Grace, which teaches me to live ever united with God, to direct all my heart's love to Him, and to do all—even the smallest of my daily actions—thoroughly, and with the one object of pleasing Him. I hold it enough if, at the sight of this great sea of failings, I can bow down and humble myself a thousand times a day, and offer great acts to God my Saviour in order to prove my exceeding sorrow for my sins, and an earnest wish to begin a new life. Were I bound to confess all these my shortcomings, I should require several hours a day of my confessor's time; hence, I merely mention the chief ones, and accuse myself of the remainder in general, with some sins of my past life, in order to secure matter for absolution. Then, centring my thoughts wholly on God and the Saints of heaven, I make deeper acts of contrition than ever, with acts of love and strong determination to begin a new life. Having received absolution, I cast myself on the ground, and thanking God to the utmost of my power, I say my penance. In certain cases, however, I put off the penance to some more convenient time.

“ Whenever I am free during the recreation after supper, I perform the Stations of the Cross, if I have not done so already, as this is a devotion which I hold dear at heart, and unless I have very pressing calls, I endeavour never to omit it. In the evening, however, when I happen to have already performed this devotion, I say some devotions and a chaplet consisting of

thirty-three ejaculatory prayers, in honour of the thirty-three years spent by our dear Saviour in this life, together with the prayer 'Eternal Father,' or else, 'I adore Thee every moment, now and for evermore, O Most Holy Sacrament. Do Thou, O Lord, have pity on us.' If I have no other urgent engagement, I make my habitual acts of love, praise, and glory to the great God.

"At the appointed hour I join the young men and address them with a few words of advice, speaking briefly on the Saint or mystery of the day ; or, should I have done this before, I speak on some other instructive subject. Then, after reading the 'Spiritual Diary,' I say a few words on what has been read, more or less, according to circumstances ; and after giving them all the usual blessing, I withdraw to my cell. Here, if I have a word to say to any one of the novices, or if any of them come to me for advice, I willingly attend to them ; and as soon as I am left alone, I usually find myself taken up with God. Continuing with my remaining prayers, I end my seven adorations, the last of which I offer in honour of my patron Saint. Then follow the short prayers, 'Behold me, O most sweet Jesus,' 'Eternal Father,' 'Bless me, sweet Lady ;' next I renew, at least inwardly, my Holy Profession ; I give myself again to Almighty God ; I thank Him, and beseech Him to help me in His omnipotence ; I make short acts of love and veneration towards Him as great as can be made, and pray Him for the wants of Holy Church, on earth, and in purgatory. In favour of the Holy Souls I renew my vow of yielding all the good works I may do on their behalf, placing them in our dear Lady's hands. I then stand up, and accord-

ing to the time which is left, I bide with God in peaceful meditation, offering my usual acts of love and glory. If I find myself unable to do this, I say a few prayers, such as the beads of our Lady, or the chaplet of the Precious Blood, with a view of driving away sleep. Before settling down to rest, if I have not done so already, I take the corded discipline as in the morning, except on certain Sundays in the year when I dispense with it. Whilst undressing I say a few Paters and Aves in honour of my Angel-Guardian, of my patron Saint, my Protectors, and Holy Advocates, besides one Hail Mary to our Blessed Lady, and the prayers, 'Eternal Father,' 'Bless me, sweet Lady,' and sprinkling my bed with holy water, I make the Christian's sign—that of the Cross.

"Finally, when in bed, I commend my soul to God; and taking a wooden cross, I press it to my breast with folded arms, as if I were in the very act of dying. Then I give myself wholly to God, and most earnestly beg forgiveness. I now picture to myself S. Joseph with all my Holy Advocates around me; and knowing that my wants are greater than my mind can conceive, I offer my prayers, in union with them, to the angelic throngs, in the same spirit as in the morning.

"Meanwhile I say the 'De Profundis,' still keeping my cross and hands as before, and commit myself peacefully to God's keeping—offering from my heart fervent acts of love and everlasting glory. At this point many inward prayers suggest themselves and shed great light upon my soul; whilst I, on my part, take whatever God wills with exceeding pleasure.

"The aforesaid preparation for death is my longest, for shorter ones I frequently make during the day—in

fact, as often as it occurs to my mind. On each of these occasions I, at least, strive to offer acts of repentance, love and praise, as great as God desires of me, and make strong resolve to begin a new life. Often, when making these acts, I seem to see my death-bed surrounded by a great number of graces and heavenly safeguards, which are like the essence of all the favours that Almighty God has ever bestowed upon me. But when my death-hour comes in reality, only my Spouse Jesus knows what will then become of me. I always make ready to die without the assistance of a Priest; because the little charity I show unto others that are dying makes me undeserving of such a favour. Besides, whatever I may do in this world, I wish it done for Jesus and for His Spouse the Church; and therefore, if I could, I would wish to make a bond with God, that no reward be given me.

"Should Almighty God, out of His supreme goodness, allow some one to assist me when dying—although I deserve to be forgotten in heaven more than any creature that can ever be created—let the Priest suggest to me such acts as I am accustoming myself daily to make in preparation for death; but let him do this peacefully, as otherwise he will do me more harm than good. Let him not tell me: 'Hope for the best because of the charity which you have shown to others,' as this to me sounds like hateful mockery. If by the special mercy of God there should be several Priests around my bedside, I from this moment beg absolution of them all, for the sins I have committed in life by thousands; and I also beg them for some word of exhortation which may rouse me to love and praise God, my Spouse Jesus, and Mary my Mother, as

much as They deserve. If on the other hand they hold aloof and keep silence, even this shall I deem a great charity ; and as soon as I am dead (supposing this could be done without scandal), let it be given out in a loud voice that no one say an Ave or a Requiem for me, or keep any remembrance of me ; for if I deserve to be forgotten by the whole court of heaven, how much more by those on earth ? ‘ Domine, non sicut ego volo, sed sicut Tu vis ’ (‘ Lord, let not my will but Thine be done’).”

If the reader be pleased to turn to the “ Rule of Life,” and resolutions made by Father Bambozzi, at the end of his novitiate, he will be able to realise the progress made by him in so short a time on the road of religious perfection, and how he used those resolutions as a ladder for scaling the heights of virtue.

If, then, in the course of a few years he was able to compass so many holy practices as not to let a moment’s time glide by unaccompanied by acts of prayer, humiliation, and enraptured contemplation, the reader may infer to what a glorious pinnacle his virtues finally raised him after the twenty-five years’ struggle he had yet to wage.

It is true, that when his office of novice-master was over, he could no longer live in holy concealment, nor delight in long passive contemplation of heavenly things ; still, he never allowed an instant of his life to pass without adding some new stone to the spiritual building by the constant practice of inward and outward mortification, coupled with charity towards God and his neighbour.

The document which we have just published fully lays before us Father Bambozzi's study of perfection ; it shows in his will a mathematical precision, directed to the practice of all virtues befitting his condition ; and convinces us that from the day he wrote those pages, he never lost a moment of his time. May the example of this servant of God stimulate the faithful to the constant practice of virtue, and, above all others, Priests and Religious, whose conversation, as the Apostle teaches, is in heaven alone (Philippians iii. 20).

CHAPTER XIII.

AT THE SUPPRESSION OF 1861 HE IS LEFT AS CUSTODIAN
OF THE BASILICA AND SHRINE OF S. JOSEPH OF CUPER-
TINO.

THE Apostle tells us that all things turn to the good of those who love God and are called by Him to be Saints. Cold, heat, tribulation, distress, famine, thirst, nakedness, persecution and the sword cannot avail to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, for Whose sake we shall have to bear with contumely, hardships and sorrow. All these sublime sayings of S. Paul's might have come with truth from the mouth of Father Bambozzi at the dawn of the year 1860, when the Piedmontese troops overran the provinces of Umbria and the Marches. He clearly foresaw all the evils that would follow on that invasion, and how thousands of souls would suffer shipwreck in consequence.

Bowed down and woe-stricken with the thought of these miseries, Father Benvenuto cast himself before God, and offered himself as a voluntary victim to stay the Divine wrath ; but though he felt thus keenly, yet he never lost his peace and quietude of soul. He humbled himself, and acknowledged the scourge of God as a just punishment for his sins—owning that these alone would have sufficed to call down God's righteous indignation on the whole world. The fate of his last three novices, who had not yet professed, and kept daily coming to him for some cheering word of comfort, made him tremble within himself. "Trust in God," he would tell them ; "abandon yourselves wholly to His merciful Arms ; place all your anxieties in His Hands, and pray on in peace."

On the 3rd of January came the decree for the suppression of religious Orders, which was quickly followed by the plundering of their goods. All hope for the three young men seemed lost ; but as their forcible expulsion from the cloister was delayed for a few months, they were able to make their vows according to their wish.

The love Father Benvenuto bore towards all his brethren, and especially towards young Priests, must have cut him to the quick when he saw them turned into the streets and thrust again into that world which they had forsaken for the cloister. Outwardly, indeed, he showed no sign of his harrowing grief : on the contrary, he set a perfect example of holy disinterestedness and resignation to the Will of God, by never uttering a word of complaint. The grief of that religious community on hearing of the barbarous decree of expulsion is beyond telling ; and the eleven months'

respite before it was enforced was like a prolonged agony.

Father Bambozzi, with all meekness and humility, bowed before the events which Providence was allowing to take place ; he cheered his brethren, strengthened their faith, and roused them to patient resignation, saying : "They may hunt us out from hence, but they can never tear us from the Heart of Jesus, nor from His love. The love of God is not confined to cloistered walls ; let us keep to the perfect observance of the Rule and we may be Saints anywhere ; let us call to mind the early Christians, as described by the Apostle : needy, harassed, woe-stricken, wandering in the wilderness, hiding in caverns, and clothed with skins ; let us imitate their patience, and do not doubt but that God will be with us, even as He was with them. Be of good cheer. Life is very short ; and after a little suffering we shall rejoice for an eternity." Thus was he wont to strengthen the weak and wavering ; and who can deny the force of words thus prompted by the Holy Ghost and accompanied by good example ?

Towards mid-September, 1861, the sons of King Victor Emmanuel passed through Osimo on their way to the battle-field of Castelfidardo. As soon as the friars heard that they had been appointed to show the princes over the Basilica of S. Joseph of Cupertino, they ventured to hope that their convent would be spared, owing to the relations of that Saint with the Venerable Servant of God, Donna Maria, Infanta of Savoy. Certain members of the community, beguiled by this fond hope, went to Father Bambozzi, and in their exceeding joy spoke as if they had now nothing

to fear—so readily is the heart of man convinced of that which it eagerly wishes. “My children,” answered Father Bambozzi, “do you know what saith the Holy Ghost? Cursed is he who puts his trust in man.” It was afterwards known that the decree for breaking up that religious community was dated on the day in which the royal princes Humbert and Amadeus passed through Osimo, and the expulsion took place on the following 18th of December. O what a day was that for our poor brethren! May God have accepted and blessed the sacrifice which they then made!

Out of twelve Religious selected by the municipality as Custodians of S. Joseph of Cupertino’s Basilica and Shrine, only two were approved of by the ministry; and these were Father Benvenuto and Father Joseph Baleani—a venerable Priest of fourscore years. Father Benvenuto was in a certain sense grieved at seeing himself thus left at his post, because he deemed himself the least fitted for the office; and it is not unlikely that he foresaw the troubles in store for him.

The altered circumstances in which he found himself led him to shape out a new course of life, entirely devoted to the good of souls. As he had no longer his novices, choir duties, nor any other of the community acts to attend to, his whole zeal necessarily spent itself in charity towards his neighbour. He attended the confessional every morning before daybreak, and stayed there till half an hour before noon, at which hour he used to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice. The Church was his home, and any one seeking him was sure to find him there, unless charity had called him away on an errand of mercy to the sick and dying. Numberless calls were daily made on him for the

blessing with S. Joseph of Cupertino's relic ; nor were his penitents limited to the inhabitants of Osimo, as thousands came to him from the country, and neighbouring towns and hamlets.

The sick, who were frequently being brought into church to receive his blessing, ventured at times to ask Father Benvenuto whether they should ever get well again ; and he generally answered :* "I am a poor, insignificant friar, good for nothing, good for nothing ! What can I tell you ? I am no prophet : certain things are known to God alone ;" and shrugging his shoulders, he would walk away with a beautiful smile on his face.

The faithful were often highly edified by his answers, and many of them, after receiving the blessing, saw their faith crowned with success. After his usual mid-day rest, he either attended the confessional, or else visited the town hospitals and the dwellings of the poor. Father Benvenuto's holy zeal soon drew on him such universal esteem and love, that there was scarcely a case of sickness or misfortune to which he was not called. How often have we not met him on the roads, under the scorching heat of the summer months, running in all haste to distant places, or again wearily plodding up by-lanes, and climbing over rocks and hedges, in order to save time. How many of his fellow-townsmen can deny having seen him on the coldest of winter days, wading through the snow by day and night, braving the storm, and proving that no

* The original Italian is characteristic of the humble, depreciating way in which the good Father used always to talk of himself. It runs as follows : "Io sono un povero fraterello, straciattello, straciattello ! Che vuoi che ti dica ? Io non sono profeta ; certe cose le sa Iddio solo."

power on earth can cool the flame of Christian charity, nor the zeal of the priestly ministry !

Some people living in the country assure us that on the bitterest of nights, as they were deliberating in the family circle whether or not to send for him to assist some one in danger of death, Father Benvenuto himself has knocked at their door without having been sent for by any one. Hardly a day passed by without his being called to see persons living at great distances one from the other ; and he always attended first to those who were in danger of death, and then to the poor and country-folk, in preference to others. His visits were short; for after administering the Sacraments to a sick person, he cheered him with a few hearty words of comfort, and hastened away. We have often known him to ascend the altar without having had time to change his clothes, which were drenched with perspiration.

Having been called one morning to a sick person living on the other side of the river Musone—distant about three miles from Osimo—he met an old countryman on the way, who had come a long distance to see him in the confessional. As he drew near, the old man said : “ Where are you going at this time of the morning, Father ? I was going to confession to you, but now I’d better go home again.” “ Brother,” said Father Benvenuto merrily, “ if that is all, we can easily set matters straight. Get you behind the bank yonder ; have your say, and you shall have absolution long before you could ever have expected it.” Thus the old man was able to go on his way in peace, and to receive Holy Communion at Osimo, long before the good Father had returned home to say his Mass.

Father Benvenuto often attended the sick and dying all through the night, at the request of certain parish Priests of the town and neighbourhood to whom he had offered his services. In these cases, taking his breviary under his arm, he was always ready to stay for hours near the sick man's bed—when there was imminent danger of death—without giving a thought to personal comfort or convenience. As soon as he was wanted he would get up at once, pray over the sick man, and whisper holy thoughts in his ear till death came upon him.

Many and many a time, after a long day's unceasing toil, when Father Benvenuto had gone to bed and fallen into his first sleep, a fresh summons has called him to another deathbed, whither we find him hastening with all speed and holy zeal. Sometimes the lay-brother out of compassion refused to wake him; but whenever he found this out he would show great displeasure and reprove the good brother in words such as these : " My friend, do not mind me. I am still strong but that poor woman—what was she to do ? It was she who was to be pitied ; not I. Another time wake me at once ; and mind you don't let poor people die off without calling me, as otherwise you will have to answer for it before God." So great, in fact, was the good Father's zeal, that from sheer stress of time he has often been obliged to say his Office on his way to sick calls.

Never would he accept any gift or offering in return for his missionary labour, as he considered it unbecoming in him, as a Religious, to do so ; and when the good country-folk wished to give him fowls, eggs, and the like, in their kindly, simple way, he

would tell them that he looked for his reward from God and not from man; and that as a Priest he was bound to accept sparingly of their thanks, so that he might not hear the awful sentence : "Thou hast received thy reward." On some rare occasions he has been known to accept a little wine when hard pressed by those who saw him heated and weary ; but he lost no time in returning to the convent ; whence after a few minutes' rest he usually repaired to the church and sacristy to meet those who wished to see him.

The zeal shown by Father Bambozzi in hearing the confessions of Priests and Religious, proved the exceeding love and respect he bore towards the sacerdotal dignity ; and many were they who, in admiration of his virtues, had chosen him for their Director. The holy man, ever mindful of the readiness with which Priests should answer the sacred calls of the Ministry, never allowed one of them to wait a moment for his convenience. He exhorted them earnestly to cherish God's holy love, and poured into their souls the spirit of edifying wisdom.

Towards working people, or those whose business or health did not allow them to wait long at the confessional, he showed the greatest deference ; and his kindness in this respect was appreciated by all.

Many religious communities of nuns petitioned to have him at least sometimes as extraordinary confessor, and the ecclesiastical authorities were only too glad to second their wishes. The following words spoken by him, on one occasion, in presenting himself as extraordinary confessor to a community of nuns, show us in what a lowly spirit he fulfilled his mission : "The Vicar-General," he said, "wishes me to come here for

a fortnight to hear your confessions. Do not expect any good from me, as I am not fit to attend to beautiful gardens, but only to barren fields full of stones and brambles. Be not therefore surprised if a man, who is used to dealing with rough people and the poor, cannot say those sweet and pleasant things to you which give such delight to chosen souls." He then began his work which bore exceedingly good fruit; and his simple words, ascetical knowledge, and sound judgment greatly edified and benefited those good nuns.

One day, leaving many of his penitents in church, he started for the convent; but as he had given the community no warning of his coming he found no one ready for him. Turning to the Sister Sacristan, who brought him this message, he said: "How sorry I am. There were so many good people waiting to go to confession, and I left them all to come to you; and here there is nothing for me to do. 'Viva Maria!'"

Many Priests and Religious from various monasteries chose him as their guide in the path to perfection, and often consulted him on their spiritual needs, either by letter or in conference. Whenever he was thus called away, he never denied his help, unless he had some sick call to attend to; and when any one wrote to him he always answered at once.

We have many letters written by him, which show far better than any words of ours the hidden workings of a soul, richly endowed with the fairest of heavenly virtues. We select one amongst these to show our readers what a Christian, charitable, and discerning spirit dwelt within him, and how skilled he was in the guidance of souls. To a nun who had

been ailing for a long time, and who was, moreover, beset by many spiritual troubles, he answered :

“ J. M. J. DEAR SISTER IN JESUS CHRIST,

“ In order the more plainly to answer your letter, I will place progressive numbers where you have inserted crosses.

“ 1. I pray our dear Saviour that He may give you fresh consolations in your afflictions ; though it is certain that you will have to put up with small troubles in this vale of tears.

“ 2. I will do so to the best of my poor means ; and do you pray that He may hear me.

“ 3. I compassionate with your bodily pain, and far more with the vexations and troubles you suffer in spirit. Offer them in sacrifice to God, ever Blessed, even by anticipation ; and whilst your sorrow lasts, try and call to mind how sad, grieved, and forsaken Jesus and Mary felt, as have all the Saints after Them. What great advantage would not your poor soul gain from carefully pondering over such thoughts ?

“ 4. It is enough that you should keep from deliberate sin ; for the rest, humble yourself to the lowest degree ; have abiding sorrow for your sins ; hate them as much as they are hateful in the sight of God ; make generous acts of resignation to God’s Will ; offer Him acts of love, acts of desire to begin a new life, and the like—even ten thousand times a day. My daughter, the more wretched you are, the more must you, with God’s help, offer Him the generous out-pourings of your heart.

“ 5. As a set-off for the faults you commit, offer Him a thousand acts of confidence, love, and the like.

“ 6. Let generosity in obedience be your help ; indeed, it is the right one. That you should, on the other hand, feel great grief at not being able to do good, especially during festivals, strikes me as being sheer folly. Listen : as far as Our Saviour is concerned, the will suffices whenever the deed is impracticable. Have plenty of good will, therefore, and you will derive a thousand times greater benefit from the little works you may do. Moreover, the essence of perfection consists in resigning ourselves to the guidance of God. Be therefore, always content, in whatever circumstances you may find yourself. It is enough that you should do whatever good comes within your reach, conformable to the state of health in which you find yourself. Were this to consist merely in suffering, sleeping, and drawing breath, then happy would you be for all eternity ! Indeed, you have the merit of all that your sister nuns do, provided you have a good intention. You have, besides, the merit of never doing your own will ; and this you should prize above all things. Oh ! how much better it is to draw the breath of life in obedience to God’s Will than to say all the Psalms of David of one’s own free will !

“ 7. Do not be cast down by melancholy nor the few tears you shed ; but as often as you are able, even in anticipation, offer them up in sacrifice to Jesus, and unite your suffering to His. Be of good cheer, then, for you may draw great merit from all things ; and rest assured that you will gain most merit by doing everything for God’s sake.

“ 8. I have told you to love your Spouse Jesus unceasingly, and to do His most Holy Will in whatever condition you may find yourself—whether you be more

or less unwell, more or less at peace, whether you be overwhelmed with melancholy, or enjoy the peace of Paradise. Let life or death be indifferent to you. In a word, whether you live or die, have no other will than that of God, ever Blessed.

“ 9. Resign yourself more and more to God, in whatever circumstances you may find yourself. Do not even wish to know what turn your illness may take; but go on from day to day and hour by hour, without solicitude, placing your whole trust in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is the means of becoming by far the more pleasing to God; and consequently happier during life, and richer in Paradise.

“ 10. Hold aloof from even the slightest wilful sin, though it be only venial. Do as I have told you in the foregoing paragraphs, and you are sure to save your soul. Be, therefore, content in whatever condition you may actually be placed.

“ 11. Bear your cross in whatever form the Almighty imposes it upon you. Jesus took His Cross into His sacred Arms without looking whether it was large or small. Do you in like manner, and you shall pay the debt of your sins in this world. I am glad that you have written with due leave.

“ 12. Become holy by such means as are within your reach. Begin this practice at once, and daily renew your endeavours to become better. Let all this, however, be done with great humility and exceeding trust in God. Recommend yourself to Our Saviour. I again pray Our Lord that He may ever bless you. On your part, allow yourself to be shaped by Him, as soft clay in the potter’s hand. Meanwhile I leave you in the Wound

of Our Lord's Side, and am your servant and brother in Jesus Christ,

“BR. BENVENUTO BAMBOZZI, M.C.”

At least once a year, Father Benvenuto was in the habit of visiting the persons under his spiritual guidance living in the neighbourhood, who, one and all, treasured up his words as prompted by God—so great was the veneration and esteem in which he was held, and unbounded the confidence which he inspired. We shall have occasion later on to speak of the graces by which God rewarded the faith of these good souls.

On his undertaking the custody of the Basilica, Father Benvenuto lived with a good and venerable Priest given him as companion, and a lay-brother, whose duty it was to keep the church clean, to serve the Masses, and to do all the household work.* As

° When I visited the shrine of S. Joseph of Cupertino nearly two years ago I found only one lay-brother in the convent opposite, doing the whole housework and waiting on three Priests, one cleric, and myself as a guest. This good lay-brother, Fra' Pippo, is a jovial friar of the old school ; and though well-nigh three-score and ten years weigh on his head, he is as lithe and quick about his work as he is ready with an answer. When there is bread to knead or macaroni to prepare he gets up some three or four hours after midnight : at other times he rises at five o'clock in the morning. This same Fra' Pippo was imprisoned and exiled to Elba (!) on the false charge of persuading a young friar not to enlist in the model Italian army. He, however, drove his keepers desperate by his cheerful ways and ready wit, for he would say : “I have to be very thankful to this new government. Per Bacco ! when I was a friar in the Pope's time I never went beyond the kitchen and the church, and now I am travelling about scot-free, and seeing the big world without having any work to do.” He was later on confined in Ancona, but as he drove the ruffians—with whom he was pent up—mad by his holy and cheerful resignation, he was let off cheap, and went back to his kitchen and church amongst his own brethren ; and there I found him, a perfect example of the hallowing influence which true religion can work on even a Neapolitan peasant.—*Translator's Note.*

might well have been expected, one man by himself could not possibly get through this work, and as no help was to be had from without, Father Bambozzi was often seen carrying wood into the small kitchen, washing plates, dressing the table, and helping generally about the house. People have likewise seen him helping the brother in sweeping the floor of the church, dusting the confessionals, altars, and benches, ringing the bells, lighting and snuffing the lamps. To such as stigmatised this work as unbecoming the dignity of a Priest, he would answer: "How can you say so? . . . Nothing is menial that is done in the service of the Church; on the contrary, I ought not to be deemed worthy of even the humble work that I am doing." Once when the lay-brother was taken ill from over-work, Father Benvenuto took his place, kept the church clean, heard confessions, went out on sick calls, prepared the food, and waited both on Father Baleani and the sick brother.

At all times he made it his special study to see that the functions of the Church were celebrated with becoming solemnity in the Basilica; and with this object in view he invited several Priests to celebrate Mass there. High Mass could not now be daily sung, but he made arrangements to have that solemn function on feast-days; whilst he himself, during the last ten years of his life, invariably said the last Mass, which ended at midday. Vespers and Benediction were likewise solemnly celebrated in the afternoon of all feast-days; whilst the functions proper to the Order were kept up by the good Father's zealous exertions, as if the church had been served by the numerous community of former times.

In 1865, when Ancona was stricken anew by the scourge of cholera, Osimo was in a panic. The whole town was in mourning; the body of the wonder-worker, S. Joseph of Cupertino, was exposed, and daily supplications raised to God by every class of persons. In spite of the studied attempts made by the civil authorities to prevent these gatherings—with a view, perhaps, of checking the panic, which is thought by some to spread infection—the Basilica continued to be crowded at all hours of the day. Moans, sighs, and the sound of weeping rose from the multitudes around the Saint's glorious shrine; and many were now seen praying there who at other times seldom set foot in God's house.

Amidst all this turmoil and fear Father Benvenuto was perfectly calm. On the first news of any one being seized with cholera he ran to him at once, not only to bless him and give him the Sacraments of the Church, but to bestow every kind of help and care upon him. In many cases, when all the household had fled from the stricken man out of sheer fright, Father Bambozzi remained alone at his post till he had performed all the services which charity could suggest both for soul and body. The calls upon him by day and night were unceasing; and we do not hesitate to say that during the two or three months of the plague he had scarce a moment's rest. Being unable to attend every case in town he was sorely grieved, and held himself to blame for being too long over some cases and otherwise wasting time. As a matter of fact, however, he was very expeditious, and whenever he entered a house and the family in their excitement seemed forgetful of the sick person's

spiritual welfare, Father Benvenuto always attended in the first instance to this all-important matter. How many, thus comforted by his charity and prayers, breathed their last in holy and peaceful resignation !

Religion alone inspires men with true courage in times of tribulation ; religion alone produces heroes, who, forgetful of self, run eagerly to the help of others ; and it is the Catholic religion alone, issuing as She does out of the Wounded Heart of the Heavenly Pastor, that produces in every clime, and at all times, ministers who, like their Master, are ready to lay down their lives for His people.

In November, 1865, Father Baleani was taken dangerously ill. We who have seen Father Benvenuto's unbounded charity towards every stranger that called in his help may readily imagine the loving-kindness bestowed by him on one of his own brethren in Religion. Father Benvenuto never left the sick Priest's side, and when he saw the end drawing nigh he gave his venerable Brother the last Sacraments on the morning of the 26th, and kept by his bedside, whispering words of heavenly comfort till death called good Father Baleani to his everlasting reward in heaven.

CHAPTER XIV.

DRIVEN OUT FROM THE SANCTUARY, HE IS RECEIVED BY
THE PARISH PRIEST OF S. BARTHOLOMEW.

THE history of the war between Prussia and Austria is but too well known, as likewise the subsequent outbreak in the Venetian provinces. Osimo, in those

days, was a recruiting centre where a number of soldiers were encamped, who at the outbreak of war were ordered to the front, and had to take the oath of fealty. Some officers begged Father Bambozzi to assist with his new companion, Father Bartozzetti, in administering the oath, and in exhorting the troops to fidelity. He answered that he would consult the Ecclesiastical Authorities before giving an answer; and when he was told that the clergy were to take no part with the government in such matters, he sent word accordingly.

This great crime of Father Bambozzi's roused the wrath of those gentlemen against his companion and himself; and accordingly nine days later they were given three hours' notice to leave their convent. Father Bartozzetti betook himself to his native town, Ancona, and was subsequently sent to Jassy, capital of Moldavia, as Missionary Apostolic, where he closed a well-spent life in the work of active ministry. Father Benvenuto, tying his necessary clothing in a bundle, went out in quest of a place of shelter; and when found, went to the Church of the Most Holy Trinity to celebrate Mass.

The news of the expulsion spread like wild-fire through Osimo. The good were indignant, and the whole town dismayed. None, however, dared to ask him to their house, except the good Priest Don Louis Renzi, who came to the fore, and quickly sent his own nephew to seek out the poor houseless Father, and welcome him heartily to his own home and church. We need not say with what lively gratitude such generous offers were met and accepted by our good Father, whose joy was unbounded at the prospect of

administering the Sacraments and celebrating the Holy Rites in the little church of S. Bartholomew. He accordingly sent for his bed, his few books, and the little else he had, and at once took up his quarters in the room assigned him by Father Renzi.

That very evening, knowing that his penitents would be waiting for him in the Basilica, Fathew Benvenuto yielded to the promptings of his charity, and went before the municipal authorities to ask leave to say Mass and hear confessions as hitherto in the Basilica. He, however, met with a flat refusal, followed by a formal prohibition ever to set his foot in it again ; and this order he understood to be extended to all his brethren likewise. “Viva Maria !” he exclaimed, as he went away discomfited ; “Viva Maria ! God be blessed ! Now I am happy, for I have done what I could, and have no remorse.” He took care to warn his brethren not to enter the Basilica, as he considered the order imperative, and also gave notice to his penitents that he should be found for the future at S. Bartholomew’s. On the very next morning he was in that church long before daybreak, kneeling before the altar in his usual attitude of deep and earnest contemplation ; and as soon as the people came, he went to the confessional until half-past ten o’clock, at which time he daily began his Mass during his stay at S. Bartholomew’s. After Mass, he again went back to the confessional.

Whilst he was living in other people’s houses, he left off using the discipline at night, so that no one should know of his penances. The Renzi family assure us that no noise was ever heard in his room, any more than if it had been untenanted. We know, how-

ever, that he did practise mortifications, the more acceptable to God as they were hidden from man. Father Benvenuto would not allow any one to make his bed, or to sweep or tidy his room, saying that he had many papers lying about which might easily be lost ; and with this excuse, he kept everybody out of his room, lest they should see his instruments of penance and his extreme poverty. Only his sister, who used to look after his linen, ever came into his room, and she used to air and make up his bed.

This bed consisted of three boards laid on two low tressels, covered with a mattress shaped like a bag, all patched and worn, over which was thrown some wretched covering. The inventory of his household goods is briefly summed up thus : a crucifix in plaster, some two feet high, on a cross slightly more than twice the same size ; an old walnut table, used as a writing-desk ; a joint stool ; an old chair that had seen better days, which was actually without arms and covered with torn leather ; a book-shelf, with two small drawers, that served as his wardrobe ; and, lastly, two low rickety chairs. To omit nothing, we may add that he had nailed on the wall several holy pictures in cheap frames.

About a twelvemonth after coming to good Father Renzi's house, Father Benvenuto caught cold in the eyes, which rendered them most sensitive to light. In spite of all the good curate's entreaties, he could not be induced to take proper care of himself, and it required an order from his superiors to prevent him from going out in broad daylight, and exposing himself to chills. He was now forbidden to attend distant sick-calls, and was advised to wear coloured spec-

tacles, in order to counteract the glare of the sun. With all this he readily complied; and when he was called anywhere in the town, he used to go out in the morning or towards dusk.

Some years previously, Father Renzi had had a stroke of apoplexy, which prevented his performing all the duties incumbent upon him; and hitherto many zealous Priests had lent him their help. As soon, however, as Father Bambozzi came into his house, all the most arduous and toilsome work of the parish was at once taken off his hands. Gratitude towards the good curate—not to speak of his love for God and his neighbour—urged Father Bambozzi to administer the Sacraments to the sick of the parish, to watch by them in their dying moments, and to undertake everything that might prove in the least burthensome to his generous benefactor. His first care was always given to the parish; and at early morning, when there was no work for him in church, he would start on his accustomed errands of mercy to the sick and poor in the town, outskirts, and country—tending, helping and consoling the sick, the poor and afflicted with such kindness that every one looked upon him with holy admiration.

Many persons, especially on his being driven out of the cloister, thought to please him by expressing regret at the harsh treatment he had received from the municipality in return for the services he had rendered during the cholera; but he made it a rule to turn the subject, being unwilling to provoke words of ill-will or uncharitableness against any one; and usually answered, “If you but knew how many sins I have to account for, you would not compassionate me thus.

Let the Almighty strike this wretched sinner as he deserves." Then he would exhort them to forbearance, and his words, borne out by example, sank deep into their hearts.

Father Benvenuto usually spent his afternoons on errands of charity, during which he strove to sow the seed of good words in his neighbour's heart; and he devoted the time between evenfall and supper either to calling on Priests who were his penitents, or in hearing confessions at S. Bartholemew's. This small church, which used formerly to be closed after the curate's Mass, became, on Father Bambozzi's accession, one of the most crowded in the town. Numbers of people flocked there every day, whilst on feast-days it was so full that one could not at times find admittance. And when on these occasions some one wanted to see Father Bambozzi very particularly, it was necessary to knock at the presbytery, next door, and to have him called through the sacristy. His confessional was beset on every side, and it was truly edifying to see this servant of God giving his whole attention to the country people, who, on their part, waited their turn most patiently for him.

Towards the middle of January, 1868, good Father Renzi had another stroke, which brought him to the grave. As long as the parish was being provisionally administered, our good Father stayed in his former quarters; but when Father Dominic Orlandi was appointed to the curacy, Father Benvenuto sent him word that if he were allowed to stay in the house, he should be well satisfied with a small store-room on the ground-floor, close to the church. Father Orlandi at once answered that he would be only too delighted to have him as his

guest, and this gladdened Father Benvenuto's heart, not from any personal motives but on account of his many penitents who were now accustomed to seeing him in, or close by, the church. We have Father Orlandi's assurance that many persons came from Castelfidardo, Loreto, Ancona, Recanati, Jesi, Rimini, Arcevia, Chieti, Teramo, Naples, and other distant parts, to consult with Father Benvenuto and to see him in confession.

On Thursdays, in the afternoon, he used to go down to the Church of S. Sabinus, whither flocked crowds of the poor, maimed, and sick, who could not make their way uphill to the town. Many also came from Castelfidardo, where Father Benvenuto was held in great esteem ; and he never left the church till he had contented all comers. On Saturdays he attended S. Mark's Church, which lies at one end of the town, and there, too, he ministered spiritually to crowds of his dear poor. On visiting days at the hospital he never failed to call on his sick penitents, whom he cheered and comforted with kind words and generous help.

Father Orlandi affirms that, in days of great gathering, our good Father used to rise an hour and a half after midnight, and on other days at three o'clock in the morning. Hardly was he out of bed, and washed and dressed, than he at once hastened down to open the church, and if there happened to be any one ready for confession, he attended to him at once; otherwise, he either performed the Stations of the Cross, or else knelt unsupported, in silent contemplation, before the Blessed Sacrament.

On a winter's day towards noon, a countryman from Montetorto, more than five miles distant from Osimo,

came to summon him to a dying man, who longed to see him. The ground was thickly strewn with snow, and Father Benvenuto, after taking some food, set out on foot, reached the cottage, heard the sick man's confession, and having comforted him and imparted the usual blessing for the sick, he began his homeward journey in a blinding snow-storm. On reaching Osimo, he was so exhausted and benumbed, that he could hardly stand from weakness, and he went to bed at once. Father Orlandi remonstrated with him on the reckless way in which he was exposing his health, and having sent him up some strengthening broth, begged him to keep his bed next morning; notwithstanding which, Father Bambozzi was up and in church on the morrow as usual.

A pious lady, who had the greatest confidence in Father Bambozzi, being taken ill in a neighbouring town, sent a carriage for him, begging him to come and see her, as she thought herself on the point of death. The good Father at once stepped into the carriage; and no sooner was he in the town, than he was told to be on his guard, as certain persons in the lady's house were determined that no Priest should come in, and that if he were seen by them he might be rudely treated. Trusting in God, he reached the sick lady's room, and having heard her confession, he blessed her, and glided out of the house as easily as he had come in, and after taking a short rest at a house close by, set out for Osimo on foot, so as to be back in time to say Mass at his accustomed time.

As long as he had anything to give away, the poor shared it daily with him; and when his own means failed, he would go begging for them amongst the

good and charitable. This he did with such good grace and deep feeling, that no one had the heart to deny him what he asked. "My dear madam," he said one day to a rich lady, "you have the chance of doing a really good deed. A poor woman has just come to me, all in rags and tatters, with her two half-naked children, and quite moved me to pity. Not one of the three could stand upright from sheer hunger, and if they do not pay the house-rent to-day, the landlord will eject them within twenty-four hours. I feel great pity for her, especially as I have not the means of helping her; but you, who have such a feeling heart, can relieve these three poor creatures, and gain merit before God. If you could but see the woman, I know that you would be moved to tears. Let us, therefore, put an end to this our poor fellow-creature's suffering." The good lady was moved with compassion, and gave him bountiful alms, with which he at once paid the rent himself, provided them with some cheap clothing, and supplied them with sufficient means for their immediate necessities.

When, in such cases, Father Benvenuto found that after providing for the most urgent wants of his poor clients there remained a balance in their favour, he invariably placed it to their credit at the Savings Bank. and in the present instance he found means to pay this poor woman's rent regularly as it fell due. In March and September of each year he had many other calls on him for the whole or part of rents that were falling due; and these he made good as far as he was able. So much was he loved by the poor that they often entrusted their hard-earned money to his keeping; which he, for greater security and peace of

mind, at once placed to their account at the Savings Bank.

Father Bambozzi was often called in to settle family quarrels, which might easily have led to law-suits ; but he invariably found means to set things aright ; hearing both sides with patience, and judging the various points at issue on their respective merits. When perfect harmony had been restored, he urged all the litigants to make their peace with God ; and this they did generally through the Sacrament of Penance on the following day.

The kindness he bore towards orphans is simply beyond telling ; and many were they who looked upon him as a kind and loving father. He not only prepared them in the Orphanage for the struggle to come, but took care to interest good Christian people in their behalf, so that they might find shelter from vice on being cast adrift on the wide world. This good work did not fail to draw down upon him the scowls of some, the malice, hatred, and taunts of others ; but of these, he made light, for as he would say to his friends : “The cause is God’s, and the end charity. The Almighty will surely protect me ; and even were I to lose my life, I would willingly lay it down for so good a cause, as it would then be sacrificed to God and the salvation of souls—for whom Christ Our Lord has given His Own Life’s Blood.”

Whilst sitting in the confessional he was often called on twenty or even thirty times and more* to

* Italians are accustomed to come into church at all hours in the morning for Confession and Holy Communion, and they always expect to find a Priest ready to minister to them. In some of the larger basilicas and churches at Rome, at Loreto,

give Holy Communion to the faithful, blessings in the sacristy, or advice urgently needed. He answered to every call, without betraying the least impatience ; and the cry of “Viva Maria !” was the holy spell by which he checked any little annoyance. The poorest of the poor, as being the most despised, were his chosen friends ; though he showed the greatest charity towards all. In hearing the confessions of first-communicants, however, he bestowed a holy zeal, even beyond his wont, and devoted several days to preparing them for the great event.

During his stay at S. Bartholomew’s Father Benvenuto received orders from the General to repair to Assisi as confessor extraordinary to the nuns of the convent “Del Giglio” (“of the Lily”) in that town. Having shown the order to his local Superior, he started at once by train, and reached Assisi at day-break on the following morning. His first thought was to beg help of his Seraphic Father, S. Francis, by celebrating Mass at the Saint’s shrine ; then showing his letters to the Father Custodian, he at once repaired to the nuns’ convent.

The work which had been imposed on him was so blessed by God that the good nuns looked up to him as on one sent from Heaven ; and without fail he will never be forgotten by the fortunate inmates of that convent. As soon as his task was done, he left Assisi for Ancona, and arrived there by night. Unwilling to lose some hours, as he must have done in waiting for the next train to Osimo, Father Bambozzi,

Assisi, Subiaco, Padua, Montevergine, and elsewhere, there are Priests in continual attendance till noon, whose sole duty consists in giving Holy Communion to the faithful.—*Translator’s Note.*

out of zeal for his penitents, walked the whole way from Ancona to Osimo—some eleven or twelve miles' distance—and arrived before daybreak. In fact, it was plain to all that obedience alone had been able to tear him away from the crowds of penitents who daily came to him at S. Bartholomew's.

During the month of March he daily said the Chaplet of the Most Precious Blood with the people ; in November he recited public prayers for the Holy Souls ; and in December he celebrated the Novena of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception with intense devotion. The congregation had never to wait for him. If he happened to be in the street on the last stroke of the bell he would run rather than be late for the service.

Often, when he has had a few moments to spare, Father Benvenuto took up a broom and swept the church-floor, which was thick with dust from the crowds that continually flocked there. Father Orlandi was not a little vexed when he found this out, and begged him to leave such work to the sacristan ; but our good Father answered with a smile : "I have nothing to do just now, and may just as well do something about the church, and then the sacristan will find everything ready."

" But such occupation does not become you."

" Oh, if that be all," answered the good Father, " it suits me very well, as I am only fit for the broom ; and even that I am not worthy to handle in God's house."

We have known ecclesiastics and laymen to be so struck by the way in which he performed this servile task that they would willingly have taken his place ;

but this he never allowed, in order not to lose the fruit of his humility.

Hearing one day that one of his brother Religious* had taken a small house, he at once went to him and begged to be his companion. Words cannot tell how heartily he was welcomed, but as everything had yet to be got ready in the new dwelling, Father Benvenuto had to wait several days, during which he seemed, in his anxiety, to be treading upon thorns. On leaving Father Orlandi he received the church key, so that he might come in and out at all times. This made him very happy, and still more thankful to his generous friend, who thus enabled him to continue as before in his work for the good of souls.

Years were, however, growing upon him, and his strength was dwindling away. He suffered at times from slight ailments, which could not escape the watchful eyes of his friends; though he was with difficulty prevailed upon to take the least care of himself. It became at length necessary to forbid his going on long country rounds on foot; and although this galled him to the quick, he overcame himself and submitted. His glowing zeal urged him eagerly onward to the help of his neighbour: yet one word from his Superiors was enough to hold him back. When thus compelled to keep at home he never remained idle, but meditated, prayed, read a few chapters of the Old and New Testaments; or his Moral Theology, which, with Holy Writ, was his

* This was Father Treggiari himself, who lived alone with Father Bambozzi from 1872 till 1875, when the holy man died. He was, in fact, intimately connected with Father Benvenuto, and none was better qualified to act as a faithful biographer.—*Translator's Note.*

favourite work and companion during his visits to the sick. He never studied other works so deeply as these; for in them, he would say, is to be found the greatest possible help for rousing the heart to the love of God and of our neighbour, and for acquiring the knowledge of Law and Justice.*

CHAPTER XV.

ON HIS VIRTUES—THEOLOGICAL, CARDINAL, AND MORAL.

§ I. ON FAITH.

IF we have seen Father Bambazzi unwearied in the practice of the virtues proper to his state, we must conclude that he had the gift of Faith to a singular degree; for the man without Faith, according to S. Augustine, is denied the brotherhood of Christ; denied sanctifying grace in this life, and hope of eternal salvation in the next. (S. Aug., Serm. 20.)

There can be no great work, continues the same

* We have many MSS., written by Father Bambazzi, which are precious for soundness of sacred doctrine. Here is a list of the several treatises which were found after his death :

| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|----|------------|
| “Lenten Sermons and Discourses” | ... | ... | 50 | in number. |
| “Spiritual Exercises for Regulars and Seculars” | 48 | “ | | |
| “Ascetical Treatises” | ... | ... | 11 | “ |
| “On Christian Doctrine” | ... | ... | 8 | “ |
| “Studies on the Rule of S. Francis” | ... | ... | 3 | “ |
| “Rule of Life for his Sister” | ... | ... | 1 | “ |
| “Small Ascetical Treatise” | ... | ... | 1 | “ |
| “Small Mystical Treatise” | ... | ... | 1 | “ |

Besides these were found : one small book entitled “Collection of Ascetical Matter” and “Compendiums and Treatises on Morals;” all of which reveal to us his great experience in ecclesiastical matters and the good use he made of his time.—*Author’s Note.*

holy Doctor, outside the pale of the Faith. "I behold," he exclaims, "a beautiful fabric of spiritual works; and lo! I find its groundwork to be Faith: I meet with the fair fruits of good works; and again their roots are cast in Faith, from whose soil they spring." (S. Aug. in *præf. Psal. 64.*)

It was Faith, and Faith unalloyed, which glowed in the heart of Benvenuto when still a child, which made him conceive such hatred for sin, and cherish such love for holy things. Thence he drew that wondrous patience amidst all his early trials, and learnt in youth to bear with meekness so many hardships, to overcome his natural likings and dislikings, to shun the dangers of youth, and to keep a watchful guard over his eyes and other senses.

Faith made him so pure and spotless in his morals, that we feel certain that he never offended in the slightest degree against holy modesty; whilst he so prized the virtue of Chastity that he spared no pains to keep it unsullied amidst all the dangers of life. It was his deeply-rooted Faith that helped him daily in loosing the ties of earthly love, in sacrificing to God all that he held dearest to heart, and fostering such ardent charity for souls. The light of Faith was, in fact, the beacon which guided all his thoughts and actions. Whatever belonged to God or to His worship was in Father Benvenuto's eyes of inestimable value, and whenever he spoke of God and heavenly things, he showed by an energy of manner, altogether his own, his high conception of their greatness.

What he felt within himself, he tried to impart to others. When speaking to country folks or the unlettered of the perfections of God, or Eternal Truths,

he used striking similitudes to make them the better understood; and his earnestness was such that he seemed ready to lay down his life for the truths he taught. You should have seen the holy exultation with which he spoke to his novices of the heroes who died in defence of the Faith. In speaking of S. Margaret, the Virgin Martyr of Antioch, he loved to recall her noble answers to the heathen judge:

“‘Tell me your name, young lady; who you are; and the Religion which you profess?’

“‘My name is Margaret; noble is my lineage; and my Religion that of Jesus Christ.’

“‘The Lady Margaret,’ replied the judge, ‘doth honour to her nobility, but how absurd that she should be a Christian. What more senseless than to adore a Crucified God?’

“‘And where have you learnt,’ exclaimed the Saint, ‘that our Lord Jesus was crucified?’

“‘In your own books,’ he answered.

“‘Then what a shame,’ she cried, ‘that reading in the selfsame books both of the Passion and of the Glory of Christ, you should believe the one and reject the other!’

“The tyrant could make no answer; and precisely because he was abashed before the youthful maiden, he condemned her to be scourged with rods, flayed with iron hooks, burnt on her side with flaming brands, and finally decapitated. See what fortitude—what a stronghold of Faith—in a young virgin!” As he spoke thus, his features were lit up and they seemed to radiate with the Faith that was in him.

In the life of S. John Gualbert he used to refer with enthusiasm to the dying legacy left by that holy

man to his monks, when he wished to have these words written over his grave : " I, John, believe and confess the Faith preached by the holy Apostles, which the holy Fathers have confirmed in the four Councils." " See what importance," he would say, " this great Saint attached to the gift of Faith !

Speaking of the glorious death of S. Peter, Martyr, he loved to point out to his novices the staunch Faith of that Christian hero, who when he was struck down by a deadly gash across the skull, seeing death before him, began saying the Apostles' Creed. Father Benvenuto deemed those holy souls happy indeed, who had given their lives for the Faith ; and gladly would he himself have died for the Faith of Jesus Christ.

Before imparting the blessing to the sick and others he always strove to quicken their Faith and to give them a sublime idea of God. His Faith was likewise manifest when he drew nigh the Altar to celebrate Mass, for which, as we have seen, he began preparing himself from the moment of his awaking in the morning. He used to spend a good half hour over the Holy Sacrifice, throughout which his exactness in uttering each word and performing all the prescribed ceremonies was most exemplary ; whilst his face glowed at the solemn moments of the Consecration and Communion. Good Friday alone was to him a mournful day, because he could not be united with his Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament. Except on that day, or in case of very severe illness, he always either said Mass or communicated.

The prayer that pleased him most was, as he would say, that of the heart, which consists in placing ourselves in the Presence of God, without using any book

but the heart; whilst collecting our thoughts we ponder deeply on God's bounties and our ingratitude. He used often to say that this was the most fruitful prayer for the soul.

Whilst he was Master of Novices, Father Benvenuto used to take his disciples at least once a year on a pilgrimage to Our Lady's Holy House at Loreto. On the days preceding their short journey he strove to make them rightly understand the holiness of that spot, where the Word was made Flesh in His sinless Mother's Womb, and found shelter during nearly thirty years. With this stupendous thought he strove to rouse within them that devotion and Faith which impels Catholics from all parts of the world to visit the sacred abode, which harboured within its walls the Son of Man, and where was heard the "FIAT" which gave rise to the Redemption of the world. When he no longer had any novices under his care he used to make his yearly pilgrimage with a Priest, who was a penitent of his. On reaching Loreto he would go straight into the Holy House and serve as many Masses as he could until his own turn came for celebrating; after which he again served a number of other Masses to satisfy his tender devotion.* Whilst ministering to the Priest he seemed all rapt in God.

* Dr. John Krœger, English Penitentiary at Loreto, tells me that the last time he saw good Father Bambozzi was under these circumstances: Whilst vesting in the sacristy he saw the venerable Father keeping close by him with a view of serving his Mass, on which Doctor Krœger said: "Father, I cannot think of allowing you to serve my Mass." Father Bambozzi bowed and went away seemingly acquiescent; but what was not his friend's surprise, on beginning Mass, to find that he had slipped into the Holy House and was kneeling on the Altar steps answering the "Introibo"!—*Translator's Note.*

Oh ! if those walls had but tongues to speak, how they would tell us of the lively Faith which moved his heart, and of the glowing Hope and Charity which lit up his soul ! When he had satisfied his devotion towards his dear Saviour and beloved Mother, he used to call on divers persons—cloistered and secular—who looked forward to his yearly visit with holy anxiety.

A penitent of his one day came to him to know whether he should do well in making the vow of concession in favour of the Holy Souls in Purgatory. "What !" he answered, "have you any doubt on the subject ? I, for my part, would allow myself to be flayed alive in behalf of those dear Souls ;" and he uttered these words with such ardour as to convince his penitent that his Charity might be put to any test. Father Bambozzi prayed daily long and earnestly in suffrage of the Holy Souls, and offered part of his discipline every night with the same charitable intention.

A lady tells us that being in great fear for the eternal welfare of her husband, who had just died, she went to Father Bambozzi, and after unburthening her mind, begged him to pray for the repose of his soul. A few days later he called on the good lady and said to her : "Be quite at ease about your husband. He would have had a very long Purgatory, but owing to the prayers said for him he will have but a few years. Do you pray, and ask others to do the same ; and mind you tell no one what I have told you, as long as I live."

§ II. HOPE.

As the fruit draws its sap from the root, so from Faith springs Hope. The germ of all Father Benvenuto's Hope was God Himself, whom he longed to behold and love in unveiled mystery. His heart drew strength from this Godly Hope, and well might he repeat the words of the Seraphic Patriarch—as, indeed, he often did: “So great is the good that awaits me, that every pain delights me.” And God Himself encouraged him to hope for the necessary means whereby this highest of all good may be attained.

Father Benvenuto was never cast down by the thought of his unworthiness. The more wretched he seemed in his own sight the more did he trust in God, who in His might can raise us from our miseries. How pleasing to our loving Lord is Hope, when coupled with holy fear and distrust of self! “O Holy Hope!” exclaims the great Augustine, “thou dost temper all our sorrows with mildness and sweetness. Hence, my brethren, love this holy virtue, and strive to make it your own, but in such a way that it be accompanied by holy fear: for he that hopes and fears not, falls into negligence: he that fears and hopes not, becomes weak-minded, low-spirited, and sinks like a stone into the depths of despondency.” Father Bambozzi hoped for Life Eternal, but always in holy fear: he looked confidently to the end, but walked warily onward, lest he should stumble in the way.

With a view to foster and strengthen this virtue, he made it a rule—as soon as our Religious had been driven from the cloister—to withdraw for a few days, at fixed intervals, for deep meditation and prayer

within the convent of the Observantine Fathers, who alone had been allowed to remain at their post. During their recreation-time he used often to display such deep and familiar knowledge of mystic subjects that the good Fathers held him to have already passed into those grades of prayer of which he spoke with such wondrous clearness.

We have elsewhere spoken of the harsh penances which he inflicted on himself; and here we shall allude to one circumstance only, which we have purposely reserved to illustrate the holy fear in which he lived. In the year 1845 he one day took his novices to his parents' cottage in the country, and his mother, who had been told by his laundress that his linen was all stained with blood, was glad of an occasion for speaking out her mind to him. As soon as she was alone with him she gave way to her great grief and reproached him thus: "Father Benvenuto, my son, allow me to speak to you once more as a mother. Why do you scourge yourself so? I know all about it; you cannot deny it: have pity on yourself and do not grieve me, by doing what is told about you. . . . All your linen is stained with blood! . . . Who is it that bids us hasten our death? . . . You might do so much good; but you seem to be trying to take away your life."

Smiling, he answered: "Do not be afraid, or anxious on my account. O mother! heaven is so grand, so beautiful, that whatever pain we may suffer to win it is a trifling thing indeed. And then I have so many sins to account for, and the debt must be paid either in this life or in the next. You must not give ear to such gossip; I shall always take care not to do

myself harm." He then left her in tears, and went to join his novices. So thoroughly was hope tempered in him with holy fear, that it made him chastise his body with scourges, gird his loins, arms, and brow with small iron chains, and practise the strictest fasts and a thousand well-devised privations.

§ III. HUMILITY.

It was not by the practice of penance alone that Father Bambozzi fought hopefully for his reward in heaven. He made it a special study to acquire all the virtues; and the means he used were mental and vocal prayer, a constant dwelling on the Presence of God, and humility joined with thorough obedience. Those who never saw him pray and meditate can form no adequate idea of his lowly demeanour, of the modesty of his look, and unaffected attitude, as he knelt on the bare floor, with his arms either crossed on his breast or hanging at his side; nor can they realise his placid countenance—at times so deathly pale that he seemed on the point of fainting, and at others so lit up as to seem all on fire.

In the year 1848 his humility and obedience were put to a hard test when his Director bade him write an account of his life, forbidding him to make known his sins. Though this task galled him to the quick he set to work about it, and produced a small manuscript, in which were minutely recorded all the graces showered on him by God. A mere fragment of this document is now in our hands, and was found by chance after his death. It runs thus:

"ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF A LIVING SINNER."

"Having been left this year without any novices, I think that this has happened by Divine dispensation, in order that I may look in good earnest, for once in my life, to the sanctification of my soul, and that I may pray for the Church as I have promised God.

"At the close of the octave of All Saints I was thinking of acting in my ordinary way, as appointed by my Director, and was looking for him in order to know his mind on the subject, when yesterday he bade me write a narrative of my whole life—a thing which at first sight inspired me with the greatest fear of my own damnation. Yesterday, Feast of Our Lady's Patronage, the Mother of God and Her Divine Son favoured me closely with Their Own presence; and I spent the rest of the day in deep, continued prayer. I think, therefore, that my Director's injunction will in the end prove a healing remedy, and perhaps cure the gangrened wounds of my poor soul. At least from this very moment I intend, in every letter I form, to offer up innumerable and ardent acts of sorrow, love, praise, and resignation to the Divine Will, and of intercession in behalf of the whole Church militant and suffering. According as I am allowed I shall give at least an idea of my great and numberless sins, whereby may be made known the great forbearance of God in having allowed me to live on till now:

"I shall moreover describe, as best I may, the benefits and boundless graces bestowed on me by God; whence may be revealed, in the clearest possible way, His great, thorough, and infinite mercy and

goodness ; as also my ingratitude, which is so vile that the moment favours are conferred upon me they become as the defilements of Egypt.

“ I shall make known my motives of action with regard to the several subjects treated, and the light in which they appear to me. With regard to certain matters, which are special to myself, I will try to speak of them as I should do if they referred to others. All this will I do with a view of guiding my immortal soul, whose redemption has cost the life of a God-made Man, and lest I should give some erroneous directions which might lead others astray from the paths of perfection.

“ O Holy Ghost, do Thou enlighten me by Thy Divine rays ! O Mary, most holy, and ye Saints and Blessed of Heaven, help me for pity’s sake, that in your company I may set about my work ! ”

Here the script comes abruptly to an end, just at the point where the narrative most likely began ; and we cannot too deeply regret the loss of this document. We shall now give our readers our own experience of Father Benvenuto’s humility, together with the testimony of persons well worthy of belief.

On being asked in 1849, after the proclamation of the republic, what he would do in case of a suppression, he answered : “ I should wish to remain quiet and put up with the world according to God’s Will, for I know that I deserve nothing better. I should seek some solitude, a wood wherein to build a chapel so as to be able to say Mass and serve my God to the best of my power ; where I would fain hide myself from the eyes of men, as being unworthy of their fellowship.”

In allusion to his family name, Bambozzi, he used to call himself “*bamboccio*,” which is synonymous with a *dotard* and *simpleton*, as also with a stone or wooden statue or *dummy*. He always put forward that he was a peasant by birth, a man of no worth, utterly ignorant, and received out of charity by the friars, though unfit for any office in the Order. When he was appointed Master of Novices—for which office our Constitutions demand a man of tried virtue—he used to say that he was sent to that post to become a novice anew; and, as a matter of fact, he not only attended to all the wants of his disciples—correcting and instructing them with great meekness, but was himself ever foremost in fulfilling all their prescribed duties, as if he were one of them.

As he had been forbidden to walk to distant places on foot, he used to pick out the most ill-conditioned vehicles whenever he had to go a long distance. The first time he went to Loreto, after his novices had been disbanded, he said to a Priest with whom he was making arrangements about the journey over-night, “But you would, perhaps, object to riding in a donkey - chaise?” “Father,” answered the other, “I don’t object at all; but a horse would take us there in half the time.” “All right,” he answered; “look to it then; but choose one of those small conveyances that are least showy, and I will accompany you.”

How often, even when mortified without reason before his novices, has he not held his peace and humbled himself to the point of making others believe that he was really at fault! The most he ever said was, “Viva Maria!” And when his Superiors rebuked him, he

never answered aloud, but, humbling himself, repeated in a low tone, “Now I begin.”

In his spare moments, he often helped the lay Brothers in the lowest and most commonplace offices ; for, besides ringing the “Angelus,” lighting and snuffing the lamps, tolling the church bells, and serving Mass for the sacristan, he used to carry wood into the kitchen and noviciate, and take upon himself all manner of offices, even the most repulsive towards the sick, especially at night-time, when the infirmarian was least likely to be about. His daily practices of humility were so multifarious, that there would be no end in telling them all.

It sometimes happened, when some part of the convent was undergoing repair, that he would lend a hand to the bricklayers in their work, saying, in his usual pleasant way, “If I, at least, knew how to do this, I should be good for something ; the office most suited for me is that of the scullery, to wash plates, polish the kitchen utensils, sweep the floors, and draw water. Were I able to be of some service to my brethren in such a capacity, I should esteem myself highly honoured.” And in order to appear contemptible in everybody’s sight, he had adopted a mode of speaking altogether his own, thou-ing everybody, saving his superiors, and using diminutives, such as “*carino*,” “*carinello*,” “*messarella*,” “*giterella*,” “*cosette*,” “*Vesparello*,” “*l’officiolo*,” etc.*

* As we have no equivalent for these diminutive endings in English, it is perhaps as well to quote the words of the original. The next sentence runs as follows : “Some of his habitual phrases were, ‘Fa un pò su l’atto di contrizioncella ;’ ‘Bada, bada, carinello, di far un pò meglio le faccenduole tue, altre-menti andrai a scaldarti,’ and others after this fashion.”

At the advanced age of sixty-four, he used to cast himself on his knees before a Priest every Friday after dinner, and with heartfelt sorrow, call himself publicly to task for the faults he might have done during the week, humbly asking for a penance to be imposed upon him. During the last years of his life, he went to confession every other day; but there was a time when he used to do so daily. During the recreation after supper, he was not ashamed, in spite of his age and position, to practise the intonation of the Mass, which he used to sing on every festival. He would go over the "Gloria," "Credo," and "Ite Missa est," over and over again; and whenever he was corrected, he invariably repeated the notes until he had mastered them, though his voice was somewhat unmusical. He used also to prepare beforehand all the triduums, novenas, prayers for the month of S. Joseph, and all the various devotions of the year, before reading them publicly in church.

§ IV. SILENCE.

Unbroken silence is faulty, as there are times when it is good, and even necessary, for us to speak: incessant talking is likewise a fault, since the Holy Ghost warns us that in so doing we cannot keep free from sin. Indeed, it stands to reason that rest should be given to our tongues, and still more to our minds, if we wish to collect our thoughts, which are so apt to wander abroad.

Father Bambozzi was sparing in his speech. Whilst he lived in the cloister, his obedience to the rule of silence was simply admirable. In giving the signal for its observance—a duty which had been entrusted

to him—he always proved most diligent and punctual. On the bell ringing for retirement, he used to hasten to his cell, and there remain under lock and key, unless necessity or obedience called him away, in which case he seemed to glide along the cloisters like a shadow. If any one chanced to salute him in silence time, he merely bowed acknowledgment, and hurried onward without uttering a word. Whenever he was called upon to correct one of his novices in choir, he generally did so by sign; but if this was not enough, he spoke but very few words, and observed the same rule in the refectory, and at all the community acts. During recreation, however, he did his best to make himself as pleasing and agreeable as possible. Some of the Religious, who were struck by his motionless attitude in church, would say pleasantly, “Ah, to-day Father Bambozzi has had a good snooze during meditation!” And he, without excusing himself, would answer, “Pray for me, that it may not happen;” or else, “What can you expect from a ‘*bamboccio*’”—a simpleton—“who is good for nothing but eating and sleeping?”

A stranger, on hearing him instruct his novices, would have set him down at first sight as a man of little learning, so great was the simplicity of his speech; but when the instruction was ended, its scope came out most clearly and forcibly; whilst the arrangement of his matter showed careful study. After closing the evening recreation with a chapter from the “Spiritual Diary,” he always added a few words in explanation. Father Benvenuto knew so well how to draw one idea from another, how to weave the thread of his discourse, that notwithstanding the roughness of his

words, his sermons were always clearly set forth, **sound** in doctrine, and full of sweet unction.

It was but very seldom that he could deliver long discourses to his novices, as their time and occupations were closely balanced; but as soon as he was free from the duties of the mastership, he was always glad to reason on God, on the Mysteries of the Life and Passion of our dear Lord, on the exaltation of Our Lady and the Saints. These subjects roused him to eloquence, and made him speak with dignified grace, noble gesture, and such a glowing countenance, that the outpourings of his heart seemed to find an eager outlet through his lips. This flow and richness of eloquence seemed to come naturally to him whenever he spoke of God or heavenly things. Outside these subjects he delighted to be held rude and unlettered, making light of his scanty knowledge of other arts and sciences, and deeming himself happy, after the Apostle, in knowing naught save Jesus crucified.

§ V. PRUDENCE.

Being often called upon for advice, spiritual and temporal, during the latter years of his life, by persons of all classes, Father Bambozzi was ever ready to counsel them and solve their doubts. People often asked him how he was able to settle off-hand so many difficult matters; and he used to answer that, keeping God alone before his mind, he spoke according to Him that which seemed best. No wonder, then, that all were satisfied and consoled, and admired the prudence of his answers.

The virtue of Prudence, which points out to us what is to be done and left undone, shone conspicu-

ously in Father Bambozzi. It was the beacon which guided his own course of life and that of others who came to him for help. It seemed impossible that a man credited with such little learning should have been remarkable for shrewdness, memory, foresight, and clear judgment, which are so many integral parts of this heavenly gift; and it was truly wonderful to see how he used kindness and severity, courtesy and bluntness, as the various wants and dispositions of those committed to his care might require.

§ VI. JUSTICE.

From his very childhood, Father Benvenuto had loved the great virtue of Justice; and as years grew on him, this holy love increased. Whatever good turn, however trifling, was done to him, he never left unrequited. The sternest principles of justice guided him in all his dealings with others, especially when acting as superior of convents, master of novices, or in the confessional. Ever fearful of betraying justice, he never accepted gifts and offerings, but rejected them with great displeasure. We are firmly convinced that no one was ever the loser in any dealings with him, but that all received at his hands largely their due, if not more.

S. Augustine gives us a striking picture of the splendour which always surrounds the virtue of justice, by placing before our eyes a weak and tottering old man, wasted in every limb, but adorned with this virtue, loving what is right, scorning to covet his neighbour's goods, even to supply his own wants; giving what is due to God, and ever ready to lay down his life in defence of the oppressed. Surely such a

one is deserving of respect and esteem from all his fellow-men. But what is it that draws this love on the old man with the wan, pale face and faltering limbs ? The answer is, "Justice." Therefore, concludes the holy Doctor, in justice there is a splendour, a beauty which, though unseen by the human eye, acts powerfully on the mind of man, and makes him love it exceedingly. (S. Augustine, in Psalm lxiv.)

The above enables us to realise the exceeding love and esteem which Father Bambozzi's justice won from all who knew him.

§ VII. FORTITUDE.

In endeavouring to carry out the dictates of Prudence and Justice, we necessarily meet with stumbling-blocks and hindrances. The first arise from difficulties which balk our way ; the second from things that may be pleasant, but lead astray. Hence the need of two fresh virtues to strengthen and embolden the soul in its arduous task, and to shield it from the onslaughts of the devil and flesh. These sister virtues are Fortitude and Temperance : the first bracing the will to battle, so as to remove every obstacle lying in the path of virtue ; the second making the soul shrink from whatever pleasures are opposed to a good life.

Whenever Father Benvenuto saw his way to pleasing God, nothing could deter him from his set purpose. He went dauntlessly onward, never looking back, never wavering in his great determination of becoming holy for God's sake, even should it cost him his life. We have seen him surmounting every obstacle that stood in the way of his becoming a Religious, depriving himself of the very wants of life, and even of sleep

—that enemy of well-doing, so hard to master—as S. Theresa used to say. Victorious over self, he took care to stifle in his heart all feeling of human respect, and to subdue his passions.

Never did Father Benvenuto falter when doing the biddings of obedience, whatever evils he apprehended from the world. He never stepped back in the path of virtue, despite the scornful taunts, unjust reproofs, and cruel blows he received from the haters of God's Church. He would willingly have borne all the evils of life, even unto death, rather than have swerved from the laws of God, or the observance of his Rule.

On many occasions, he showed, in his public conduct, such utter fearlessness, such constancy to duty and to his plighted faith, that he foiled the wickedness of his enemies, putting them to shame, and drawing on his head their bitter vengeance. He gave the lie to their malice, by holding life for what it is worth, saying with the Apostle: “For to me to live is Christ; and to die is gain” (Philip. i. 21).

In the year 1861, as he was one day returning from a sick-call, an individual on the way struck him a blow on the head. Turning round to the villain, he said smilingly, “Viva Maria! Will you not say Amen?” And he went his way. His conduct, in 1855 and 1866, when Osimo was stricken with cholera—and again, in 1874, when its neighbourhood was made desolate by epidemic fevers—showed, indeed, the value he had set upon life.

§ VIII. TEMPERANCE.

The virtue of Temperance, which makes us keep watch over our senses, was—one may say—cherished

by Father Benvenuto, from the day he came to the use of reason. As a youth, he knew no pleasures ;* and on becoming a Religious, he began that unrelenting warfare against the flesh, which lasted to the end of his days. He never allowed his senses to enjoy any deliberate gratification—not even that of smelling a flower. We have heard him, more than once, preach that it was perfectly useless to gratify the sense of smell in any way, and frivolous to care for scents and perfumes. His eyes never lingered on anything that might conjure up the least unhallowed thought; and he shrank, not only from all unseemly or improper talk, but shunned even such as verged on buffoonery. We have known him to gall his sense of taste with the bitterest herbs, and deprive himself, not indeed of necessary food, but of such as was most to his liking. God alone can have numbered his daily acts of self-denial.

What precautions did he not take to watch jealously over his virginal purity ! To his unceasing strife against his passions, we must add the long list of penances he practised, his frequent fasts, continual prayer, his ever-present thought of God, his loving devotion to the Blessed Virgin, the help he was always begging of the Saints, the humiliations and taunts he

* A convert clergyman, now a Priest in Liverpool, went some four years ago from Loreto to Osimo on a pilgrimage to S. Joseph's shrine, in company with Dr. John Kroeger, the English Penitentiary at the Holy House. Wishing to do honour to the occasion, he ordered dinner from the inn to be sent to the house where the Fathers lived, and asked Father Bambozzi whether any champagne was to be had in the town. The good Father replied in the affirmative ; then, turning to Dr. Kroeger, he said : “ Vino spumante sarà quello che i Tedeschi chiamano la birra ? ” “ Sparkling champagne, no doubt, is what the Germans call beer ? ” Such was Father Benvenuto’s knowledge of the good things of this world !—*Translator’s Note.*

bore with such amazing courage and patience—these were the means by which he stifled the smouldering embers of lustful concupiscence, and triumphed gloriously over the flesh and the devil.

S. Prosper, speaking of the fruits of this virtue, says (*S. Orospes de Vitâ Contempl.* lib. ii. cap. 19): “Temperance makes a man abstemious, sparing, sober, peaceful, modest, silent, serious, truthful. It takes root in our souls, curbs licentiousness, tempers immoderate passions, increases holy desires, chastises evil propensities, regulates that which is unruly and changeful within us, chastens our heart’s affections, drives wicked thoughts away, suggests good ones, puts out the smouldering fire of concupiscence, fires the lukewarm soul with the hope of future blessedness, lulls the mind into calm peacefulness, and ever shelters virtue from the whirlwind of vice.” Whoever has known Father Bambozzi personally, will not fail to recognise that all these effects of the Divine gift of Prudence were clearly manifested in him.

§ IX. LOVE OF GOD.

But what would all these virtues have profited our good Father, had he not fostered the queen of them all—Charity? “If I shall speak with the tongues of men and of Angels,” says the Apostle (*I Corinthians*, chap. xiii., v. 1 to 3), “and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I should have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should

deliver my body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing."

As from lack of light every flower loses its beauty, every hillside its charm, the field its green freshness, water its limpidity, the snow its whiteness, and every object its fairness, so, from want of Charity, every virtue becomes clouded, all merit loses its brightness, and there remains naught in virtuous deeds but mere natural goodness, which avails nothing for our eternal salvation. And as, at break of day, all created nature is reclothed in its former beauty, so, when Divine Charity dawns on the soul, all virtues become hallowed, supernatural, divine, and worthy of life everlasting.

Well did Father Benvenuto strive for this queen of all virtues—this noblest of heavenly gifts. He felt that it came from God; that it was poured on our hearts by the Holy Ghost; that it was the greatest and first commandment. Words fail to tell with what ardour he consecrated all the love of his heart to God, even from the springtide of life; how this love grew wondrously greater and mightier in the course of years; how he strove to love God above all things, because God is Himself worthy of infinite love. Except as the work of God's hands, all created things were to him as dross. His mind could find no peace, save in the contemplation of God's boundless perfections; his will sought nothing else but to be united with the Supreme Good.

Father Benvenuto never lost sight of the Divine presence. To please God, to do His holy Will, and to love Him, were his only desires, his one ambition. To serve God the better, to approach nearer to Him,

by acts of love, by words, by thoughts, by deeds, was the whole scope of his life. He breathed nought but God; he could speak of nothing else but God; and he had no other aim in all he did but God—and Him alone.

The object of Charity and Hope being one and the same, Father Benvenuto loved God, in the hope of unfailing and everlasting reward; but still he was ready to love without recompense. We have abundant proofs of his charity being so great, that in doing God's work he knew no fear, and was blind to all worldly advantages. And this is what Theologians rightly term "the love appreciatively supreme."

But some will not unnaturally ask by what means was Father Benvenuto able to reach such a sublime degree of Charity? The answer is simple: Charity is a free gift of God, and one He willingly bestows on those who seek it; but, as Father Bambozzi used to say: "He who wishes to attain it, must long for it ardently, and beseech God earnestly for it; he must wage unrelenting warfare against self-love—that implacable foe to the love of God. He must ponder on those thoughts which most tend to rouse us to His love, such as His boundless perfections, His infinite claims to our love, His love for us—in life, in ignominy, in death. Lastly, he must turn his eyes to the everlasting reward prepared for those who love Him."

These were the thoughts which filled his own mind and heart from the day that God's worthiness of all love dawned on his soul, and he kept dwelling on them till his dying day, fanning incessantly that flame of Divine love which glowed within his breast, and raising it to such intensity that he would fain have been a

man of huge intellect and endowed with thrilling eloquence, so as to enkindle the same fire in the hearts of all his fellow-creatures.

§ X. CHARITY TOWARDS HIS NEIGHBOUR.

Love such as this, so strong and so keen, could not keep within the bounds of the holy man's breast, and from the outset of his priestly life he yearned to work hard for the glory of God. This zeal which, according to the Angelic Doctor (S. Thomas xii., quest. 28, art. 4), arises from an intense and vehement love towards God, and which struggles to overthrow everything that stands opposed to His Will and His honour ; this zeal which made King David pine for the glory of his Lord's House ; which made the Apostle weep with those who wept, become weak with the infirm, but which burnt him to the quick when he saw his neighbour fall ; this holy zeal had so thriven in Father Benvenuto's heart, that he would have laboured day and night for his neighbours' good, and spent his life amongst the heathens to bring them to the light of Truth, had not his Superiors ordained it otherwise. If at any time his zeal was a source of pain to him, it was when he thought himself good for nothing, on account—as he would say—of his laziness, ignorance, and niggard measure of holy love.

Being unable to attain the end of all his great aspirations, he strove, without being in the least cast down, to do what was within his reach. Thus, as he grew riper in years and knowledge, he added daily to his stock of zeal and charity.

The contemplative and active life he led at Fratte Rosee, was but a prelude to the toilsome work in store

for him. At Fratte, the field of his labours had been somewhat extensive, whereas, in the novitiate, he found it much more contracted and this enabled him to offer his will in sacrifice to God. His heart was at all times with the poor and the sick, so much so that he seemed to grow young again when, during his mastership, he was allowed on rare occasions to do some slight work of active ministry. His joy seemed unbounded when he was called to the sacristy by some old, careworn, or sick creature for the blessing with relics, or asked to give Holy Communion; for all that he did for God weighed lightly on him, and, whether instructing his novices or working actively for the good of souls, we find Father Benvenuto giving his whole mind and heart to his work.

We have already seen how he requited, by kindness and prayers, those who did evil against him. We may add that he has oftentimes been known to cast himself at the feet of those who reviled and insulted him, and beg their forgiveness for having unwillingly provoked their wicked wrath. Prostrating likewise before the Blessed Sacrament or a crucifix, he was wont to call down God's blessing on those who had wronged him grievously. We cannot number the insults he received from his enemies—and virtue has many such—yet not one of them can ever accuse the holy man of having rendered evil for evil. Far from it, whenever it lay in his power, he promoted their temporal welfare, and never failed to commend their souls to God.

We cannot pass over his well-ordered charity towards his parents and relations, and the care he be-

stowed on their spiritual welfare. Every time he met them he strove to rouse them to the love of God and the practice of virtue. When his father was taken ill, in December, 1851, Father Benvenuto paid him frequent visits, exhorting him to be patient and resigned, in the hope of eternal reward ; and when the old man breathed his last, on Christmas Eve, his son was at his bed-side praying for the departing soul. Father Benvenuto did not give way to immoderate grief on this saddest of earthly partings ; but consoled his widowed mother, cheered his brothers and relations, and went back to the convent, where he celebrated the Christmas festival with the fulness of holy joy, breathed into him by Faith.

Three or four years later his mother lost her sight ; and, as she had been a penitent of his for some time, he had now a double duty to fulfil towards her. And right well did he do it. During the last years of her life, he visited her very frequently, and afforded her every comfort which charity could suggest. His words fell on fruitful soil, and were treasured up in the heart of this good and truly Christian woman, who passed to a happier life on the 15th of December, 1865—just a fortnight after the death of her good daughter, Dame Scholastica. As her end drew nigh, Father Benvenuto never left his mother's side until she had passed into eternity. All his brothers and nephews were weeping around the lifeless body ; but he was cheered and buoyed up by Faith, which teaches us that the death of the righteous is but a journey from exile to home.

After the suppression of 1861, Father Benvenuto was, as we have seen, actively engaged in the work of

the Ministry. On one occasion, a certain man of disorderly habits, and a public blasphemer, having fallen dangerously ill, his wife summoned up courage enough to tell him plainly that there was no hope for his recovery, and besought him to look to the welfare of his soul. Awe-stricken at the thought of imminent death, he declared his determination to die as became a Christian; and asked to see Father Bambozzi. Hardly were the words spoken, than the happy wife hastened off at once to call the good Priest; but what was her surprise on finding him already at the door of her own house, seemingly waiting for some one to let him in. On entering, Father Benvenuto went straight to the sick man's room, and, after a kindly greeting, cheered him up and heard his confession. Having reconciled him with God, and set his soul at rest, he gave him the Holy Viaticum, followed by Extreme Unction; after which the repentant sinner calmly awaited the moment when God should call him away.

During the rounds he used to make in the parish of Passatempo, he had occasion one day to hear the confession of a sick countryman, in whom, however, there appeared no symptom of approaching death. Four days later, the poor man had become so very much worse that at ten o'clock at night his family were in fear of losing him. In their confusion, some wanted to call Father Bambozzi, others the parish Priest, who was nearer at hand, whilst a third party wanted to send for the doctor. As often happens in such cases, nothing at all was being done; when the difficulty was solved by Father Bambozzi himself, who, though certainly not summoned by any one, knocked at the countryman's door at eleven p.m., and

entering, comforted the sick man, heard his confession, and prepared him for death. This unlooked-for visit at such an hour of the night* took the members of the family by surprise, and convinced them that God Himself had directed His servant's steps.

All his fellow-townsmen will own that in the discharge of his priestly office, nothing could hold him back, neither the wrath and threats of the wicked, nor the wretchedness of squalid poverty; neither distance, nor obstacles, nor yet his own bodily ailments: not even the ill-fame of any one wishing to see him. How often have we not ourselves seen him returning from some dingy hovel of the poor, his clothes swarming with loathsome insects, which he had no sooner shaken off, than he was again at work among his beloved poor. The hope of increasing God's glory by leading souls from the paths of sin has been known to make him face dangers of no small magnitude, and many a time to climb over crags and rocks that might have daunted the courage of a nimble lad. Self-sacrifice never cost Father Benvenuto a sigh nor a word of complaint when by it he could bring comfort to his fellow-man in God's Name. We cannot number the times we have known him, when haggard and weary, exclaim, "Now I am happy! Viva Maria!" and set to work again as if he were beginning his day's work.

Calling to mind all the virtues practised by this holy, God-fearing man, we may well say, with S. John Chrysostom, that "Faith is the origin of all goodness,

* Those who have lived in Italy, and know how strictly the rule is kept by all Regulars, of being within doors by two hours after sunset (due ore di notte), will see something extraordinary in the mere fact of Father Bambozzi's being abroad at eleven p.m.—*Translator's Note.*

the spring of holiness, and the first source of our religion; that no one without faith ever deserves to be united to God, nor has such a one ever risen to the highest pinnacles of perfection." (S. Joannes Cris. Serm. De Fide, Spe, et Charitate.)

CHAPTER XVI.

ON HIS SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.

We hesitated a long time before undertaking to write this chapter; for, on the one hand, we wished to avoid the charge—so easily incurred nowadays—of being over-credulous, or fanatical even; whilst, on the other, facts were brought to our knowledge by persons of unimpeachable character which seemed to us so cogent and forcible, that we should not have fulfilled our duty as a truthful biographer had we passed them over in silence. When, moreover, all the witnesses who disclosed these facts expressed their readiness to confirm them on oath, we had no course left to us but to record some, at least, of the supernatural favours whereby God willed to glorify His servant here on earth. In doing so, we disclaim giving to our narrative any authority but that which is purely human, since the Catholic Church alone is the supreme mistress of truth, and to her belongs the sanctioning of such matters.*

* The preliminary episcopal inquiry into the merits of Father Bambozzi's "Cause" was opened by Mgr. Seri-Molini, Bishop of Osimo, in September, 1877. Every fact brought forward is being carefully scrutinised and weighed, and all the witnesses examined and cross-examined before the Bishop's Court. If after a trial of this kind the judges deem the cause for Canonisa-

Keeping these considerations in view, and with the hope that a plain statement of fact will tend to make Father Bambozzi dearly loved and honoured, we proceed faithfully to record some predictions, cures, and other signal favours obtained through his intercession and blessing.

No. 1.—A lady had suffered for many years from a glandular tumour on her breast, but as it caused her no great inconvenience, she yielded to a feeling of bashfulness, and never mentioned the matter to any one. As the tumour, however, went on increasing in size, she grew exceedingly anxious; but before calling on a surgeon, she wished to take Father Bambozzi's advice and to receive his blessing. The good Father gave her the usual blessing for the sick, with S. Joseph of Cupertino's relic, and told her to see a surgeon at once. As soon as she reached her home, she sent for a doctor, who prescribed an ointment; but as she obtained no relief after ten days' treatment, she went back to Father Bambozzi and told him so. "Well, then," said he, "do you wish S. Joseph to restore you to health?" The good lady answered that she was ready to bow to God's Will with regard to her sickness; but that she took to heart having to give such trouble and annoyance to those who waited upon her.

tion made out—clearly and beyond doubt—the whole evidence is sent up to Rome, whither likewise all the witnesses are summoned. If, again, after a full and most searching investigation in Rome, the "Cause" is judged worthy of being proceeded with, then the servant of God acquires the title of "Venerable" pending the half-century which ordinarily elapses before the Canonical process of Beatification can be commenced. Dr. Joseph M. Zacchini, M.C., formerly a novice of Father Bambozzi's, has been appointed "Postulator" of this "Cause."—*Translator's Note.*

Father Benvenuto then made the sign of the Cross several times over her with the relic, blessed her, and said, "Look here; I have no more time to give you. Go to S. Joseph of Cupertino's room, place the affected part against the relics there, and be at ease." Without adding a word, she straightway went to the sanctuary, and did as she had been told. That very evening the glandular swelling had disappeared. The persons who had attended her in the foregoing week would not believe in this instantaneous cure until they saw for themselves that not the faintest trace of the tumour was perceptible.

No. 2.—The above cure was not openly published in the district, though the grateful lady could not refrain speaking about it to some other ladies of her acquaintance, amongst whom was the local Superior of the Sisters of Charity. It so happened that shortly afterwards, a nun, who was a relation of the Superior's, came to the convent, suffering from two distressing cancers, which allowed her no rest, either by day or night. Hearing of the instantaneous cure wrought on the lady of whom we have just spoken, the sick Sister eagerly wished to see the same good Father, trusting that she too should obtain her cure through his intercession. She accordingly went to Osimo with the Superior and two or three friends, and repaired to S. Bartholomew's Church. Not finding the good Father there, they knocked at the presbytery, where the parish Priest welcomed them, and said: "So you have come at last. Father Bambozzi has been expecting you, and told me to let him know as soon as you arrived. Wait a moment, and I will have him called." On hearing this they were all taken aback, as they knew full well that

no one in Osimo could have been informed of their journey. Meanwhile Father Bambozzi came down, and listened compassionately to the sick Sister's petition for his blessing and prayers that she might be freed from her distressing sickness, if such were the Will of God. The good Father spoke a few words to increase her faith, signed her several times over the affected parts, and told her to go with her friends to pray before S. Joseph's shrine, bidding her be of good cheer. The good Sisters went to the Basilica, and kneeling before the Saint's shrine, begged him heartily to obtain the great favour desired. Whilst they were there praying, the sick nun felt the pain growing less and less, until it ceased altogether. Rising with her friends, she returned home to the convent and found that the two cancers were perfectly healed, having merely left a faint outline of their former existence. Three days later she started for the place whither she was bound; and, though several years have since run by, the good Sister has been quite free from cancerous symptoms.

No. 3.—A Sister of Charity was troubled with a painful affection on the middle finger of her right hand. The surgeon who attended her operated on the palm of her hand; but this caused the pain to increase, made the finger contract, and weakened her hand and arm so much, that she could neither sew nor do any housework, as she broke everything she attempted to carry. In this pitiable condition she was sent to a house in Castelfidardo, where she lived in great grief because of her compulsory idleness. This Sister had been present at the instantaneous cure of which we last spoke; and, in hopes of being herself cured, she begged the same persons to accompany her to

Osimo, whither they accordingly went. It happened that Father Benvenuto, seeing these good ladies praying, as before, at S. Joseph's shrine, went up to them and asked them what favour they were begging of the Saint. The Sister answered that she longed for the cure of her arm. "Tell me now," he said, "why do you ask this favour?" "Father, that I may be of some use to my congregation; for now I am not fit for anything." "But supposing," he suggested, "that this finger were not to get perfectly straight, it would not matter, would it?" And she answered: "As long as I can use my hand for the house-work, I care little about my finger." "Well, then," said he, "be quite at ease. Come with me, and I will sign your hand, and bless you." Having done this, he sent her back to pray at the Saint's shrine. On reaching Castelfidardo that same evening, she found her hand and arm wonderfully strengthened: all pain was gone, and she was able to do some work, though the finger, as Father Bambozzi had foretold, was still contracted. Her cure was so radical, that a few days later the Superior gave her work in the convent, which she performed without difficulty as long as she remained in that house.

No. 4.—In another religious community, the principal teacher of the young lady-pupils felt a glandular tumour gathering on her breast, accompanied by very keen, and throbbing pains. The poor creature could not overcome her bashful feelings in making known her sickness, which she bore in silence for two years. The pain grew so violent, however, and the tumour so large, that she made up her mind to speak to the Lady-Superior on the subject; whereupon some

Sisters of Charity were called in, who gave her the ointments usually prescribed in similar cases. The patient obtained some relief at first, but shortly afterwards the pain came back and the tumour went on increasing in size. The Superior, seeing that the treatment was useless, advised her to go to Father Bambozzi, and beg him to bless her. Accordingly she set out of a forenoon with some other nuns and her young pupils for the Church of S. Sabinus, where Father Bambozzi was wont to go on Thursdays. Here they asked a poor woman whether the good Father had yet arrived ; and on being told that he had just gone to the parish Priest's house, they all knelt down before the Blessed Sacrament. Whilst they were thus praying, the holy man looked out of the Sacristy ; and, catching the eye of the sick nun, beckoned her to come to him. As he had received no intimation of her coming, the Sister was not a little surprised at being thus singled out amongst so many others ; and, full of joyful hope, she rose and went to the Sacristy. As soon as she approached him, he said abruptly : " You have something to say to me—what is it ? " She answered : " My Mother-Superior sends me to you, Father, that I may be signed and blessed, because I am suffering from a very distressing complaint." The good Father heard her with compassion, and exhorted her to trust in God's goodness ; then, drawing the reliquary from the small bag, which he always carried on his country rounds, he signed her with the holy relics, and after imparting the usual blessing, said : " Well, now, don't think any more about your complaint. You ought to have something else to tell me ; but will you tell it me ? " " Very willingly, Father, if

you will give me a hearing ;" and forthwith she told him how she had been in a most pitiful state of spiritual depression and desolation. A few appropriate words from the holy Priest soon proved unctuous balm to her soul, and for days after she experienced the greatest consolations. The good Sister likewise obtained freedom from her bodily ailment. The swelling disappeared entirely, the pain ceased, and in a very short time every trace of her long-endured sickness had passed away.

No. 5.—A lady from a neighbouring district, being taken dangerously ill, was conveyed by her husband to Osimo, that she might be attended by the able physicians of that town. Weeks rolled by, and no favourable change took place in her condition, until, hearing of Father Bambozzi's widespread fame, she begged him to come and hear her confession. The good Father answered most readily to the call: and after doing as he had been asked, told her to request to have Holy Communion taken to her. The lady, however, either because she thought there was no immediate necessity for so doing, or perhaps from some motive of false human respect, did not yield to his wishes, but promised that she would communicate as soon as she returned home. Then Father Bambozzi replied, "If you do not communicate here, as you are now, I will pray the Almighty that you get worse, until you do." As he foretold, so it happened. The lady, persisting in her refusal, began from that moment to grow so much worse, that in a few days she found herself at death's door. At this awful juncture she remembered the holy man's words, and asking for Holy Communion, she received it with great devotion. Three days after this act of obedience

she returned home, entirely freed from her distressing sickness which had reduced her to so sad a state.

No. 6.—A poor woman, the mother of a large family, was reduced to great misery by the utter thriftlessness of her husband, who went away one day, leaving his family quite unprovided for. After many days of hardship and trial, the poor woman repaired on Easter Sunday to S. Joseph's Basilica, and finding Father Bambozzi in the confessional, opened her heart to him, amidst a flood of tears, which almost choked her utterance. The good Father compassionated her, and restored her peace of mind by saying, “Now, go on doing your duty, for no later than this day, a man will come to you with ten francs which your absent husband sends you.” He then dismissed her with the usual blessing. As the poor woman was making her way from the church towards the cathedral to receive Holy Communion, she met a man, who, calling her, gave her a small parcel, saying, “Your husband sends you this money; he is well, and will soon return.”

No. 7.—Father Benvenuto was oftentimes summoned to the hospital to visit his dying penitents. On one occasion, a messenger came to tell him that a certain man, whom he had often attended, was in a dangerous state. “Tell the nuns,” he answered, “that his time has not yet come.” The nuns, however, sent the same person back with a more pressing message; but he again gave the same answer. At length, seeing the poor man reduced to the last extremity, they sent a woman in quest of the good Father, to say that death was imminent. A few minutes later Father Benvenuto himself entered the ward; and when the nuns

told him that they had sent a woman after him, he said, "She may look for me, but she must come here to find me." He had, in fact, arrived of his own accord, just at the time when the patient stood in greatest need of his help and of the last rites of the Church. Words cannot tell how the good Sisters were struck by such occurrences, which happened not once but frequently.

No. 8.—In the year 1867, a young girl from Castelfidardo, about fifteen years of age, suffered from a very ugly sore on her right arm, which in fourteen months' time had grown so bad that the surgeons decided on amputating the limb. This so grieved the poor girl, that she wept night and day; but the two surgeons of Loreto and Castelfidardo, seeing that delay was only making matters worse, fixed a day for the operation. Such was the girl's state when she started from Castelfidardo to Osimo, on the eve of the day appointed; and her mind was so intensely worried, her bodily pain so great, that she seemed to be fainting at every step. When Father Benvenuto saw her, overwhelmed with sadness, and with eyes red with weeping, he felt great pity for her, and after hearing her confession, strove to console her. Taking her into the sacristy, he cheered her up, saying that the surgeons should not cut off her arm. As she went on weeping after he had blessed her, he exclaimed, "Oh! so you don't believe what I say? Now listen; as soon as you reach home, set to work weaving a little—a little, mind; you will spin four or five woofs, not more. On your way home, recommend yourself to S. Joseph, and don't doubt that God will grant your request. For two years you will not be able to move

your arm perfectly ; when the seasons change, you will feel some little pain ; but for working purposes you will be able to use your arm freely." The young girl took courage at these words, and kneeling down, begged him to command her to S. Joseph, that she might be able to make the sign of the Cross with her right hand, since she was ashamed to make it with her left. On this he answered smilingly, that she would be able to do it with her right hand, but never so as to touch her right shoulder perfectly, as some token of her sickness should remain. The child went away, and everything happened as had been told her. No sooner had she reached home than she tried to weave, and was able to do so without pain, though not without shedding many tears of consolation. Her mother and all their neighbours wept for joy, for they knew full well the nature of the infirmity which had so long maimed her. On the following day came the two surgeons from Loreto and Castelfidardo, who laid out their instruments and made everything ready for the amputation. A draught was given her, the bandages were undone ; when, to the amazement of the surgeons, the operation was found no longer to be necessary. They asked her what she had done to her arm, and she answered, "Nothing." "How, then," said they, "can the arm have healed?" But she could only say, "It is cured now, and you are not to cut it off." "Certainly not," was their reply ; and, putting away their instruments, they went their way, not a little puzzled at the wondrous change which had taken place within two short days. The secret of her cure was known to all her neighbours, who were astonished and delighted to see her weaving after so many months

of sad suffering. The young woman now enjoys perfect health.

No. 9.—In 1868-9, a certain woman from the neighbourhood of Osimo came to see to Father Bambozzi, and after she had been to confession to him, he said to her seriously, “Oh! do you know, your husband will be taken ill and will be brought to the brink of death? But he will not die after all. Something more terrible than this will befall you; but what this is I cannot tell you, because it would frighten you too much.” Her husband was, in fact, taken so seriously ill that the last Sacraments were administered to him, and a Priest was continually at his bed-side for two whole days; after which he grew better, and in a short time recovered. This man’s brother was also taken ill, and he, too, was at death’s door. Meanwhile the woman herself was brought to bed of a child, and grew so seriously ill, that in a few days she was reduced to the last extremity. On the 16th of January, 1875, she breathed her last, leaving her husband and brother-in-law convalescent.

The husband of the deceased deposed to this prediction, and he is borne out by the midwife; both, in fact, express their readiness to swear to the above facts having been told them by the woman before she died.

No. 10.—In the year 1873, a Sister of Charity, likewise from the district of Osimo, was cruelly tormented by a cystic tumour of the liver, which would not yield to medical treatment, though the usual means had been resorted to. She was obliged to stoop as she walked, and she became so disfigured that she was ashamed to let any one see her. There was no course

left but to submit to an operation, which she made up her mind to undergo at Bologna.

Before starting, however, she went to Osimo to ask the blessing of the man of God, of whom she had heard so many wondrous things ; but as he was putting on the sacred vestments for Mass when she approached, he merely said, "Go now and thank S. Joseph." "I will go and thank him, Father," said she, "when the Saint has granted me the favour : but first——" "Go, go now," said the good Father, "obey, and thank God, and after Mass I will bless you." She obeyed accordingly ; and after receiving his blessing, she was able to stand in her natural upright position. He then told her not to undergo any operation ; that she should get well, though little by little ; and that if she went to Bologna, she should die there. As a reward for her faith, she was perfectly cured of her complaint, after the lapse of about two years—little by little, as had been told her.

No. 11.—A gentleman of Osimo, who held our good Father in great esteem, had the misfortune to lose two little boys when about three years old. A third child, on reaching the same age, was attacked by the same illness that had carried off the other two, and this was a bitter trial for the parents. On this the father sent for the holy Priest to bless his little one, who seemed on the point of death. When Father Benvenuto came in, he found the mother beside the cot all bathed in tears ; but he cheered her up at once, saying, "Don't be at all afraid, he shall not be taken from you ; nay——" and here he added something concerning the future of her boy. No sooner had he spoken, than he cast himself on his knees in prayer, as was his wont ; then, rising,

he blessed the child, who at once rallied, and gradually recovered perfect health, to the great joy of his parents.

The disposition and tastes shown by the young lad to this day go far to make us believe that as the first part of what was foretold about him came true, so also will the latter.*

No. 12.—In the year 1861, the Sisters of Charity in charge of the hospital patients in Osimo sent word to Father Bambozzi, begging him to pray for their Superior, who was seriously ill. "You may tell the Sisters," he answered, "that her cure is beyond hope." A few months later, the sick Superior was conveyed to Bologna, and the kind Sisters sent the same messenger to the good Father, asking him again to pray for the recovery of their Superior's health. "You may go back to the Sisters," he answered, "and tell them that the Superior has now no longer any need in this life; let them pray for her soul." A few hours later on that very day they received a letter to say that their Superior was dead.

No. 13.—The brother-in-law of one of Father Benvenuto's penitents was stricken by malignant fever (*morbo-nero*), in the year 1867, which soon brought him to the point of death. Father Benvenuto was called in, and, having seen to the good man's spiritual wants, was asked by his penitent whether there was any chance of her brother-in-law's recovery. "This

* The judges of the Episcopal Court will inquire into the nature of this latter prediction, and carefully note whether or not it be eventually fulfilled. This seems to afford a good opportunity of testing the validity of an important prophecy of the holy man.—*Translator's Note*

year, there is nothing to fear," he replied ; "but another year he will die of the same illness." The events bore out what he had said.

No. 14.—In 1873 a poor woman suffered from a local affection, which so stiffened her right hand that she was unable to close it in any way. She could neither sweep her rooms, draw water from the well, nor do any work about the house. One day she went as usual to confession to Father Bambozzi, and began telling him of her misfortune ; but he interrupted her, saying, "Oh, now let us think about confession, and afterwards we shall go to the sacristy, where I will give you S. Joseph's blessing." When he had done this, he said, "Now you may go and set about your work ; you will not be able to bend your middle finger properly, but that does not matter, as you will be able to do your work." On her return home she found herself able to bend and close her hand ; and forthwith took to her work, to the great wonder of all her friends.

No. 15.—In the foregoing year he had told this same person that she would be overtaken by sickness, and have to keep her bed for many days. This he told her, with a view of forewarning her to patience in the time of trial, which was indeed hard when it came; for though all possible attention was bestowed upon her by the physicians of the charitable institute where she was lying, the sickness yielded in nothing. To crown her misfortunes, the Superior of a ladies' seminary, where she had been engaged, told her that as the schools were about to re-open, some one else would have to take her place. This naturally made the woman very sad, and when Father Bambozzi came

in to see her, he asked what was the matter. She told him how matters stood in a few words ; and he, putting his right hand upon her head said, "Your illness lies wholly here. You may tell the Superior not to look out for another person." "But what ! how ?" "You tell her so," he replied, "and do not trouble yourself about the rest." She obeyed, and when the schools were re-opened a few days later, she was able to resume her work, without feeling ought save a little weakness during the first few days.

On the 18th of March, 1875, after having heard her confession, he told her that this was the last time he should ever be called upon to do so ; and that if she sought him another time she would find him in the nave of the church. And thus it happened : for the holy man's requiem was solemnly chanted five days later in the Basilica.

No. 16.—A poor woman, having two of her little ones seriously ill, brought two garments to Father Bambozzi to be blessed, in which she meant afterwards to wrap the infants. When he had blessed them she asked him whether her two children would recover ; and he answered, "Would you not be happy if they were both of them to go to Paradise to-morrow ?" Next morning one of the children died—the other later on in the day.

No. 17.—Whilst Father Bambozzi was still living in the convent, a learned and pious Priest came to pay him a visit along with a number of students of the School of Higher Studies and Seminary at Osimo. The Priest, who knew Father Bambozzi merely by report, and had never spoken to him before, was much surprised when, after a friendly greeting, and a kind

word to all, the holy man turned to him and in a few moments began talking of things which concerned the welfare of his soul. As the Priest had never made known his inner life to any one, and as Father Bambozzi could not possibly have known by natural means the hidden workings of his soul and advised him so accurately upon them, he believed from that moment, as he does now, that the holy man came by that knowledge in a supernatural way.

No. 18.—A somewhat elderly lady of title once consulted Father Bambozzi as to whether she had not better look out for a new servant, in place of one of her household, who was getting old. "Keep her," said the good Father, "she will be able to serve you as long as required, for you will not outlive your husband by two years." Her husband had died on January 29th, 1859, and she breathed her last on November 26th, 1860.

No. 19.—A worthy person from a distant part of Italy was in great grief about one of her sons who had been out at sea for many months without writing home. In May, 1873, she went to Osimo, and asked a nun, from whom she had heard of Father Bambozzi's holy life, to beg him to pray God that she might have tidings of her son. The good nun did as she had been asked; and as the person had left Osimo, Father Bambozzi told the nun to send her word to be quite at ease about her son, as God would eventually send her consolation. Months, however, glided by and no news came. The poor mother was in deepest grief, when on Christmas Day she received a letter from her son, giving tidings about himself, and enclosing a draft for a considerable sum of money. In September of the following year,

the sister of this good woman came to Osimo for the feast of S. Joseph of Cupertino,* and wished to see Father Bambozzi in confession. We may judge of her surprise when, before she had time to utter a word, he told her to thank God for having consoled her sister with tidings from her son, and for the money they had received on the Redeemer's Day. "How so, on the Redeemer's Day?" quoth she; but he answered, "Is not Christmas Day that of Our Redeemer?" Father Bambozzi could not have known this from any one; certainly not through the mother or the nun, as they had not been in correspondence of late. Hence were they all at a loss for a natural explanation of how he came by these particulars.

No. 20.—A country woman who used to go to confession to Father Bambozzi, at the Church of S. Sabinus, was one day told by him that if she had any things to buy for herself, such as a scarf or a skirt, to choose it in black to save money. The woman, in her simplicity, did not understand the bearing of his words;

* The town of Osimo is well worth a visit, especially on the feast of S. Joseph of Cupertino, when its fifteen thousand inhabitants make holiday. At night most of the houses are illuminated, and in the evening there is a fine display of fireworks in the market-place. Osimo is the ancient Auximum, which was occupied by Pompey in his wars against Sulla and Cæsar, but declared in favour of the latter. It became a Roman colony B.C. 157. Another town on the sea-shore, close under the cliff of Aucona, bears the proud civic motto, "Senatus populusque Humanæ." It existed even before Rome; and now consists of some three hundred fishermen's huts. Amongst the heirlooms of its former greatness is the famous crucifix of Sirolo—so called—which is said to date from Apostolic times. Pilgrims to Loreto should not fail to drive to Humana (twelve miles), as also to Osimo (eight miles), passing, in this latter trip, by the battlefield of Castelfidardo.—*Translator's Note.*

but each time she came to confession he repeated the same thing. At length, after a year's time, she came to him mourning for her husband's death. Then he said to her, "For a whole year have I been telling you about it; but you, poor child, do not understand anything. Did I not tell you to get ready your mourning weeds?" She answered, "Who could have foreseen such a misfortune?" and he said, "Come now, set your heart at peace, and adore God's decrees."

After having had the Holy Sacrifice offered for the repose of her husband's soul, she returned on the following day with alms for a second Mass, but the holy man said to her: "Now you can save even these few pence, for your husband has no longer need of Masses." As she insisted on leaving the alms, he said: "I will offer the Mass, but it will be applied to the Souls in Purgatory; as I tell you that your husband's soul is already in Paradise."

* * * * *

We might record many other similar anecdotes, but we think that we have placed enough before our readers to convince them that Father Bambozzi's soul was very dear to God.

CHAPTER XVII.

HIS LAST YEARS AND DEATH.

In the last two chapters we have somewhat deviated from the chronological order which we have endeavoured to follow from the outset of this poor work. We nevertheless thought it well to group together whatever related to the holy man's virtues and supernatural endowments, though we had already slightly referred to them before. We now take up our narrative from August, 1873, to the time of the holy man's death.

We mentioned at the close of the thirteenth chapter that one of his brethren in Religion having taken a small house in the year 1872, Father Bambozzi at once prayed to be received by him, and was heartily welcomed. Who can tell how often he had raised his heart and soul to God to obtain the favour of living amongst his own brethren, and of closing his eyes in their arms ?

In his new dwelling Father Benvenuto purposely chose the smallest room, situated just over the front door, so as to be ready at every call, though in reality he was but seldom at home in the daytime. Out of gratitude to Father Orlandi the holy man went on ministering spiritually in the parish of S. Bartholomew, and refused the custody of another small church which had been placed at his disposal.

As Father Benvenuto said the Canonical hours with his friend, they fixed on times when he was least liable to be called away on errands of charity. Before beginning the good Father used to collect his thoughts

and beg help from on High. He always stood up whilst reciting the Divine Office, with his head usually uncovered, and his book open before him, and was most careful in bowing his head towards the Blessed Sacrament wherever such an act of homage is usual—he prayed in short, with such devotion as to rouse feelings of true Christian piety in all who beheld him.

Having sworn enmity to idleness and loss of time, he used to take a manuscript full of "Moral Cases," or other spiritual treatises, when on sick calls, so as to have something to read on his way from house to house. During his meals he was wont to speak about what he had recently read, and loved to converse on other useful subjects, such as Moral Theology or Holy Writ, so as to shut out all possibility of idle, useless talk. In conversation he often made fun of himself, saying : " We Theologians hold and opine thus," or " This is our opinion as a Theologian," and then break into hearty laughter at this assumed sententiousness on his part.

The days were few indeed when he was not called out, whilst reciting the breviary or sitting down to his meals, twice, thrice, or even oftener for advice, for a word in private, a blessing, a request for Masses, a petition for alms, or a sick call ; and he would gladly have left his place at table to attend to all had he not been forbidden to do so. He was always allowed to rise when the case seemed pressing ; but at other times he had to refrain—although yearning, like the Apostle, to become the servant of all, that he might reap a rich harvest of souls. After dinner he spent a short while in conversation, in practising the chants of the Church, in reading over something which he

would have to recite in the solemn functions ; after which he withdrew to his room for the usual midday rest. Whenever he heard a knock at the door he at once arose from the bench on which he rested ; and if the brother failed to answer the door promptly he would throw on his habit and go out to see if it was he who was wanted. Thus it often happened that he obtained no rest at all.

Living as he now was with one of his own brethren, who was his confessor, and had formerly been his Superior in the cloister, Father Bambozzi was most humble and submissive towards him, and from the first declared that he wished to live under obedience. As winter drew nigh his brother Religious told him that he ought not to go out before daybreak, or when the snow was on the ground, unless he wore stout shoes and warm stockings, as he would otherwise endanger his life. He accordingly bought some warm clothing and obeyed his friend in this as in everything else. Father Benvenuto now performed his long journeys on horseback or behind a cart, as he had been forbidden to go on foot ; but he grudged the money thus spent, as he looked on all his savings as the property of the poor.

His love of poverty was such that whenever he had occasion for spending money, either for his own urgent requirements or in giving alms to the poor, he always asked due leave beforehand ; and when denied he smilingly bowed submission, repeating as he went away, "Viva Maria!" He might have hoarded up a good sum of money had he put by all the alms given him, as he numbered many wealthy friends who would willingly have provided for his wants.

But he never turned the charity of others to his own account ; though when he saw them well-disposed he often pleaded feelingly for his dear poor, and for many families who, though in distress, still scorned to beg. To these he often brought money at times when he was least likely to be noticed. He provided many Priests with alms for Masses not only in Osimo but in distant towns, and even out of Italy. And in order that justice might not miscarry through his own or other people's forgetfulness, he at times offered Mass, and would have others do the same, to supply any possible oversights.

Meanwhile a glowing love of God urged the holy man to make daily progress in virtue and godly knowledge ; and this explains how, after so many years of priestly life, Father Bambozzi never forsook his study of Holy Writ, Moral Theology, and the Sacred Liturgy. His zeal urged him ever onward, and made him "a mirror of humility and edification to all who had dealings with him" (S. Gregory). Nor did he preach by word alone, but by the force and example of a truly Christian and priestly life. His love towards God and his neighbour could not but show itself in outward works ; and as it grew in fervour, holiness, and perfection, so did his example draw souls more and more to God.

We cannot number the times we have seen him kneeling on the bare ground before the Blessed Sacrament, with his heart and mind deeply imbued with the Real Presence of his Saviour, whom he used to call his Love, his Spouse, his Treasure, his Life, his Paradise, his All. He meditated with such intense devotion on the Way of the Cross that any one

gazing on his features would have thought that the whole woful tragedy of the Passion was being wrought before him—so keen was his realization of that awful scene. Who amongst his fellow-townsmen has not seen him, as the bells chimed the morning and evening “Ave,” kneel bareheaded in the very streets and squares, saying the “Angelus” with unaffected piety? And whenever he met a procession accompanying the Blessed Sacrament to the sick and dying would he not kneel down on the bare ground; and rising when it had passed, join the pious followers in honour of his loving Saviour?

Father Benvenuto’s love for Holy Mother Church was so marked that all her tribulations wounded his heart to its inmost depths; her needs urged him to pray God on her behalf; whilst her former triumphs, and his unfailing trust in others to come, filled him with overflowing joy. He loved the Church tenderly, yet staunchly, and bore with many hardships in defending and exalting her. The insults heaped upon her by her renegade children hurt him to the quick; and it was with a feeling of the deepest humility that he offered himself as a victim to stay the Divine wrath which had visited his country. But God willed it otherwise.

He, however, never ceased to work for the good of the Church. “Let us pray,” he would say to his disciples and penitents, “that the Almighty may raise up Priests full of zeal and charity. A holy Bishop hallows his diocese and edifies the whole Church; a zealous Priest may sanctify a town, a district, a parish. Let us never cease praying the Lord of the Harvest that He may provide good and

trusty labourers for His mystic Field. Oh what a heavenly boon and blessing is a holy Priest!"

The last two or three years of Father Benvenuto's life were turned by him to wonderful account. Even in his old age he seemed to fly along the road as he hastened to sick calls. His prayers during the closing months of his life had become deeper and longer: he had, in fact, acquired a constant habit of prayer, in the same way as he had long since trained his mind to an abiding contemplation of God's presence. In saying even those prayers of everyday life, during which our fickle minds are so apt to be distracted, he was all absorbed in God; so much so that we have known him to fall into material mistakes whilst celebrating the Holy Sacrifice and saying the Divine Office. When his companion happened to correct him in the latter case he gladly repeated the correction, in order that the "Opus Dei" should be perfectly fulfilled. Whenever he had any doubt on a point of Moral Theology he at once took advice, so as not to misguide the souls under his care. Each day brought to light some newly-devised mortification practised by this holy man; and we think it enough to state that whilst going up staircases he used often to bend his knees and kiss the steps unseen by any one. It was the dust on his lips and face that betrayed him on more than one occasion.

As the year 1874 was drawing to a close the holy man could not help feeling that age was weighing on him; but this did not lessen his energy. He tried to make light of a severe cough which troubled him; though his friends warned him to take more care of himself. For a few days he kept in bed, out of obe-

dience, till five a.m. ; but as soon as he was rid of his cold, and free to act as he pleased, he again took to his early hours.

Having been fully reinstated in the service of the Basilica in the opening days of the year 1875, he habitually arose at four a.m. ; went to some other church to hear confessions until the doors of the Basilica were opened ; and then attended his own confessional till 11.30, when he said Mass on week days, and sang it on Festivals. One glance at his features, however, was enough to tell that he was struggling against bodily weakness, and that his health was fast giving way. He never spoke or even hinted at being ill, but went on working with unabated zeal, and even greater energy than ever.

It was only at the beginning of March that he spoke to some of his cloistered penitents of being unwell ; telling them "to make ready for their Easter confession as he was about to undertake a long journey, and if they did not make haste they would perhaps not be in time." Towards the middle of the month he began to feel a distressing tightness across the chest, which hindered him from breathing freely. He endeavoured to shake off this complaint by taking a hot drink at night, which must have done him good, but after the third night he refused to take any more, saying that he no longer needed it. Whilst he was reading the prayers offered nightly in the month of March in honour of the holy Patriarch S. Joseph, the faithful in the Basilica noticed that his voice was hoarse, strained, and unusually painful of utterance. The holy man worked boldly on, however, and only

yielded when sickness stretched him on the bed of death.

On the 19th of March Father Benvenuto himself closed the solemn functions in honour of the glorious Patriarch S. Joseph, and then for the last time raised his hand to bless the faithful in church. This done he went to the sacristy, and having glanced at the confessional to see if any one awaited him there, and finding no one, he went home, determined to do something to rid himself of his distressing complaint. He accordingly went to his companion and asked to say Matins for the morrow earlier than usual, as he wished to take a hot foot-bath, in the hope of relieving the painful feeling across his chest.

This was the first time that Father Benvenuto had spoken of being unwell, and his companion, suspecting that the sickness must, on that account, be serious, sent secretly for a physician, and whilst the bath was being prepared they said Matins together. Withdrawing to his room Father Benvenuto stripped his arms of the small iron chains he used to wear, took from his breast the iron crown with seven points, as also the two wooden crosses from his bed. This done he took the bath, which gave him no relief whatever; and when the physician came in, to his great astonishment, a prescription was ordered for the following morning. The good Father, who wanted to get up and to be in church at the usual hour, told the doctor that he could do without the medicine: that his illness was not serious: that he was sorry he had been sent for needlessly, and so forth; but as the physician insisted on his taking the drug, he said: "At least allow me to say Mass." The doctor re-

joined that he would call early next morning and do all in his power to oblige him consistently with his duty. Calling in as he had promised, and finding that no graver symptoms had set in, the doctor allowed him to say Mass on condition he took the drug immediately afterwards. Father Bambozzi rose at once and made ready to celebrate the Mass of Our Lady of Sorrows—proper to that day—but he was hardly able to finish it—and this was the last Mass he ever celebrated.

His hands and face began to show symptoms of swelling. Whilst taking off the sacred vestments, he happened to see a young Priest near him, and, calling him aside, the holy man bequeathed him a priceless legacy, bidding him love the confessional, and be there willingly and frequently, especially in the grey hours of the morning. As he was thus speaking, his strength failed him, and he was obliged to sit down; but though well-nigh exhausted, he persevered till he had uttered those last few words of zealous warning.

Upon this, he was at once put to bed and given his medicine; but his illness grew apace, and on Saturday afternoon—20th of March—his breathing had become so heavy, that every breath he drew was, so to speak, a strained groan, which rent the hearts of those around him. No one could have stood near unmoved by pity. In the course of the day he was bled twice; many leeches were applied to his chest, and plasters and blisters to his arms. He spent a restless night, and when the doctor called in on Sunday morning, the last Sacraments were ordered to be administered to him without delay.

On taking to his bed on the previous morning, Father

Benvenuto said to his brother Religious, "Mind, dear friend, when it is time to give me the Most Holy Sacraments, do not withhold them a moment from me, from fear of flurrying me, as I desire them eagerly ; and you would do me a great and grievous wrong were you to let me die without them, out of compassion." Accordingly, when on the Sunday morning he was asked whether he was ready to receive the Holy Rites of the Church, he gladly welcomed them ; and, having reconciled his soul, received the Most Holy Viaticum with a feeling of deep and lowly reverence. As soon as he had communicated, he was seen all rapt and absorbed in thanksgiving to his Saviour for this last loving visit to him on earth.

Extreme Unction was next administered to the good Father, who himself answered the prayers of the Church with such devotion that the ministering Priest was moved to tears. When his brother Religious rose to give him the Papal Blessing, he was filled with the greatest reverence ; and, on being told that S. Joseph of Cupertino's body was to be publicly exposed, and a solemn Triduum offered for his recovery, he exclaimed, " Not for the health of the body I do not even think of it ! For the soul, for the soul, yes—for great are its needs. Let us all pray that God may grant me forgiveness of my sins ; enable me to pay my debts in this life ; and in His mercy vouchsafe me everlasting happiness in the next." After speaking these few words he relapsed into his own thoughts.

Meanwhile, no means were spared that could help him in his sickness. A consultation of three physicians had been held at noon, but all declared that the patient had spoken too late ; that the last few days' heavy

work had generated a complicated disorder, and that he was now beyond hope of recovery. They, however, prescribed remedies to lighten his suffering, and prolong his last moments.

He was, in fact, suffering from spurious pneumonia of both lungs. A fresh application of blisters opened two large wounds on his legs, and somewhat relieved the breathing; whilst generally a slight improvement for the better was perceptible. Cupping, leeches, and blisters formed part of the second day's treatment, and gave some relief, as he passed a quieter night, and obtained some hours' rest, though he felt extremely weak.

As soon as the news of Father Bambozzi's dangerous illness spread in the town, consternation and grief was felt on all sides. At all hours of the day people of every class of society kept continually making inquiries; whilst the clergy, headed by Mgr. Seri-Molini, our zealous Bishop, showed the keenest sympathy with the sick Priest. God only knows how many prayers were offered up for him as he lay on his bed of death; not only by his own brethren, but by Priests, nuns, and the crowds of his penitents, who might have been numbered by thousands. Certain it is, that no person lying in danger of death in the town of Osimo has ever—within our memory—evoked such an outburst of love, esteem, and veneration.

Some exalted his charity, others spoke of his unflagging zeal in doing good; many called to mind some favour received at his hands, others compassionated his great sufferings; all spoke of his unblemished morals, blessing and praising his virtues; and thanking God for having vouchsafed them the

favour of having lived and conversed with a Saint.

On Monday, the 22nd, the holy man showed such signs of improvement, that had he been left to act freely, he would have left his bed to begin his life of toil anew. He was already talking of hearing confessions, giving blessings, singing in the Church, and showed, in his last moments, an intense longing for life to spend it anew for others.

The inmost thoughts of his mind and heart are best revealed by his own words ; and his one anxiety, during his brief respite, was for his penitents. "If such and such a one should call," he would say, "let him come to me as he wishes to make his confession, and you may then leave us." After a few words of greeting to many who called on him, he would say, "Shall we settle our little affairs ? My friend, Easter is nigh—when shall we sweep clean our house ?" meaning the conscience. He wished, in short, to begin his active work again, but this was forbidden him ; and when the physicians warned him not to trust too much on his slight improvement, he beat his breast, saying, "Viva Maria ! . . . I should have taken so kindly to work, for idleness to me is an unbearable martyrdom. But it is well that my will should be broken once more."

Each time that the wounds on his arms were dressed, the pain was so sharp and keen, that even at a distance he might have been heard moaning and heaving heart-rending sighs. As soon as the pain was relieved by the fresh dressing, he would turn to those beside him, and say with a smile on his lips, "Ah ! the countryman (alluding to himself) would fain know nothing of

this kind of thing ; but, poor man, he needs must get used to it !”*

Father Benvenuto resigned himself in every way to God, and to those who kindly ministered to him ; one thing only did he beg of the latter, viz., that when the solemn moment of death drew nigh, they should take him out of bed, and place him on the bare ground, that he might die like his holy Father S. Francis.

From every Priest who came to see him he humbly begged the Holy Blessing and Absolution. Even on the eve of his death we all cherished a fleeting hope that God would hear our humble prayers and spare him to his friends. We were even making far-seeing projects with a view to prolong his precious life, if possible ; but our hope soon vanished. Almighty God in His Supreme Wisdom had judged His servant ripe for heaven, and willed in His mercy to crown his life, which had been sufficiently long, because well spent, and rich in virtuous deeds.

The holy man had, however, to pass once more through the chastening ordeal of pain and suffering, which he bore with wondrous resignation. On Monday night he was again oppressed by heavy breathing and a collapse of his strength, to counteract which the physician had recourse to violent remedies, which increased his sufferings to no purpose, and made him call out in his anguish, “I am exhausted . . . ‘Domine

* The last sayings of the holy man are so full of beauty in their native homeliness that I feel bound to give them as they were spoken by himself, “Eh ! il contadino non vorebbe saperne di queste faccenduole ; ma, poveretto, bisogna che vi si adatti.”—*Translator’s Note.*

fiat bona Voluntas Tua'—Lord, chastise me; for, in sooth, Thou hast good cause. Have no pity on me in this life; but do Thou have mercy on me in the next. Deal with me as I indeed deserve; and I will love Thee always, yes, always!"* And pressing the Crucifix to his breast, he drew strength in his sufferings by kissing the Sacred Wounds of his loving Saviour, and oft repeating: "Fiat, fiat semper bona Voluntas Tua."

His confessor, seeing the great crowds flocking to visit him, and especially so many dignitaries of the Church and titled persons amongst them—for our good Bishop called no less than three times—warned him to guard against any temptation to pride, adding, "These good Priests, who, with our worthy Bishop and the faithful, come to visit you, do so out of reverence for the Priesthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to honour our Father S. Francis. You have, therefore, no reason to harbour thoughts of vanity, as their good actions are independent of any merit of yours." "Of my own I have nothing, Father," he answered, "save wretchedness and sins. 'Ego autem sum vermis et non homo.' I trust in God; He will help me. Father, I thank you for the timely warning you have given me. Pray for me."†

* "Non ne posso più . . . 'Domine fiat bona Voluntas Tua' . . . Signore bastonatemi pure, chè ne avete ragione. . . . Non abbiate compassione di me in questa vita: usatemi però misericordia nell'altra. . . . Trattatemi pure come merito: tanto io voglio amarvi sempre, sempre."—*Italian Text.*

† "Non ho del mio, Padre," ei rispondeva "che la miseria ed i peccati: 'Ego autem sum vermis et non homo.' Confido in Dio. Egli mi aiuterà. Padre, vi ringrazio del buon avviso che mi date. Pregate per me."—*Italian Text.*

On the Tuesday forenoon, the greater part of the clergy of Osimo, headed by our zealous Bishop, called in to see him and to comfort him. Few were the words uttered by the dying Priest, who now for the first time showed great agitation—throwing out his arms as if to thrust something away from him, beating his breast, frowning angrily, and shielding himself with the sign of the Cross. The struggle was short, but violent. He shortly recovered his composure, and relapsed into a passive state of suffering. We all conjectured that he had there and then sustained a fierce assault from the evil one, urging him to take pride in the visits and respect paid him.

Well was it for him that he had become skilled in spiritual warfare, and that, having never yielded during life, he found himself the winner in this last terrible struggle. This triumph was written on his peaceful countenance, God having been pleased to cheer and sustain the holy man in the last stage of his earthly pilgrimage with heavenly consolations.

A short while before this, having been left alone, as he thought—though there was a young man watching beside him—he began to show symptoms of restlessness, crying out, “I burn! I burn!” The young man, thinking that the raging fever and violent pain were overcoming him, said, “Do you feel very ill, Father?” “No,” he answered smilingly. “But you were complaining of such a burning pain . . . ?” “Yes, yes,” he replied; “I burn with love!”

In the afternoon he grew worse, and his mind began to wander a little. A few words, however, at once recalled him to consciousness; and when urged to bear his suffering with resignation, he would answer,

"Yes, suffer for love ; bear all for God ; and die for the love of God."*

As the sun was setting, his brethren—who one and all had been his penitents—came around him and begged his blessing and prayers for themselves, for the whole town, and all his other penitents. Raising his eyes to heaven, and stretching forth his hand, the holy man blessed those present and absent, and promised that if God showed him mercy, he should pray for them all. He then composed himself to rest, whilst his brethren stood mournfully beside him.

Meanwhile the dying Priest was heard repeating some fervent prayers in an undertone, the most frequent being, "Fiat, Domine, fiat bona Voluntas Tua." He was thus peacefully communing with his Maker, when, at 1.45 on the Wednesday morning, he fell into a state of coma, whilst pressing an image of Jesus crucified to his breast. Those who beheld him in this state might well have thought him rapt in the deepest contemplation, rather than passing from earthly to heavenly life. His countenance was peaceful and serene ; a sweet smile had settled on his lips ; the very fulness of his features, caused by sickness, made his face far more comely than it had ever been during life. Thus lay the man of God when, with heavenly sweetness, he breathed his unblemished soul into the Hands of his Maker, even as an angel might have glided from earth to heaven at the call of God. At two a.m. on the Wednesday of Holy Week, 1875—the eve of Lady Day—this faithful soul began an eternity

* "Si, soffrire per amore, patire per Iddio, morire di amore di Dio."—*Italian Text.*

of bliss, after a well-spent life of three score and six years.

Happy soul that now dost enjoy the fruit of thy priestly labours in the glory of the Beatific Vision, remember thy promise to us, thy brethren, who are still toiling here below, and obtain for us a life rich in virtuous deeds, and a peaceful end, like unto thine own !

To please those amongst our readers who might wish to know something of his outward appearance, we may add that his expression was somewhat severe, his forehead prominent, his eyes deep-set and small, his nose well-shaped, his mouth somewhat large, his chin regular, his cheeks ruddy, his ears jutting out, his complexion dark, and the crown of the head bald, with a little hair beside each temple, but none in front. He was low of stature, strong in health ; and his eye was so keen that it terrified when he looked stern, comforted and soothed when he spoke gently.

Father Bambozzi's illness was short and painful ; and proved a fitting epilogue to a life shorn of all earthly comfort, and teeming with toil, grief, hardships, and self-denial.

The last earthly ministration having been dutifully bestowed on his lifeless body, it was clothed in the religious habit, and laid out in a room next his own. At break of day the great bell of the Basilica was solemnly tolled, and the faithful flocked in crowds to gaze for the last time on the still features of their good Father, and to kiss his hand once more. To prevent this outburst of devotion towards God's servant wearing a look of fanaticism, orders were given to deny admittance to all save the friends of the house, and care was

taken to keep the hour of the obsequies concealed from the people.

It being now Wednesday in Holy Week, and the Fathers wishing to honour the memory of the saintly religious by a solemn Requiem, they settled everything as soon as possible, and towards ten o'clock in the morning his body was borne into the Basilica. As people were on the look-out, the news of the coming ceremony spread at once through the town, and the small square in front of the Basilica was soon filled with persons of all conditions.* Every face bore traces of the deepest sorrow, and many a tear was shed as the bier was borne from the house to the church. The four men who carried the bier attest that in the short transit between the house and the Basilica they smelt a sweet and powerful fragrance, which they could liken to nothing that they knew of, and many other persons present likewise vouch for the same fact. The Basilica was crowded, not only whilst the Dirge for the Dead and the solemn Requiem were being sung,

* On the Feast of S. Joseph of Cupertino, in 1876, I went to Osimo, and there witnessed a sight which I shall never forget. The Basilica was so crowded, that during High Mass I was unable to get in, even through the Sacristy; and the small piazza, opposite, was densely thronged with people, who kept up a continual knocking at the house in which Father Bambozzi died. A few strangers were admitted, and this caused the crowd to tarry in hopes of ultimate success. The holy man's room had been "taken by storm" the night before, and a large piece of his tunic torn off by the people as pious keepsakes. Whatever may be said about their ignorance, for which they are not answerable, Italian peasants possess undeniably one bright jewel, which knows no blemish, in their pure, unsullied faith, handed down from father to son from the days of the holy Apostles. When one has seen these people pray, it becomes easy to understand that the Almighty should deign, of His Goodness, to work miracles in their behalf.—*Translator's Note.*

but all through the day, until late in the evening. At daybreak on the morrow, which was at once Maundy Thursday and Lady Day—the people began again to crowd around his bier.

Great pains had been taken to keep the hour of burial secret; but although everything had been settled as quietly as possible, still a crowd of some hundreds of people gathered at one p.m., who, although the snow was falling, accompanied the precious remains to their last resting-place. On arrival at the cemetery the coffin was opened as usual, in obedience to the law, so that the body should be identified; and a scroll, on which was written an account of his life, was enclosed in a zinc tube and placed in the shell. Many of his friends and penitents came up to take a last farewell; and many cut off pieces of his garments and hair as precious keepsakes. On this the assistants screwed down the coffin and placed it in a niche of the burial wall. A few days later the following inscription was placed on a marble slab over the opening :



Sacred to the Memory

OF THE REVEREND FR. BENVENUTO BAMBOZZI,

OF THE MINOR CONVENTUALS OF S. FRANCIS.

HE WAS OF UNBLEMISHED MORALS; SIMPLE IN HIS SPEECH

AND MANNER.

FOR MANY YEARS NOVICE-MASTER OF HIS ORDER,

HE WAS A MIRROR TO HIS BRETHREN

OF THE OBSERVANCE OF THEIR RULE OF HUMILITY AND PENANCE;

TO THE POOR, THE SICK, THE NEEDY,

TO THOSE WHO CONFESSED TO HIM THEIR FAULTS
HE SHOWED BOUNTEOUS CHARITY.
IN HOLY AND MERCIFUL DUTIES HE UNTIRINGLY WORKED
IN TOWN AND COUNTRY ;
LIVING NOT FOR HIMSELF, BUT FOR OTHERS.
EXHAUSTED BY HIS TOILS, HE BREATHED HIS LAST ON
MARCH 24, 1875,
AT THE AGE OF 66 YEARS,
SURROUNDED BY THE RAYS OF HIS PIOUS WORKS, AMIDST
UNIVERSAL REGRET.

News of his death was sent to the Religious of the province in these words :

“ **V**ERY REVEREND FATHER,
“ The Reverend Father Benvenuto Bambozzi, formerly Master of Novices in the Convent of S. Joseph of Cupertino at Osimo, died this morning at two a.m.—a victim of his charity towards his neighbour—from an attack of spurious pneumonia of both lungs, which resisted all medical treatment and the care bestowed on him by his brethren. Born on the 23rd March, 1809, in the neighbourhood of Osimo, he joined our Order when twenty-three years of age, and having been trained at Urbino and Pesaro for apostolic life, he was ordained Priest. The first field of his zealous labours was Camerano, near Ancona, where he was Superior, as likewise at Sta. Vittoria di Fratte, in the diocese of Fossombrone, whither he was subsequently sent. Here he administered the Sacraments and preached with such wonderful evangelical simplicity that his departure was much regretted by

the good folk of those parts when in 1844 he was appointed Master of Novices to our province. The great number of excellent Religious who were once his disciples bear witness to his unblemished, virtuous, and exemplary life.

“ During the last fifteen years he lived amongst us, he was able to give full scope to his zeal on behalf of souls. To this holy work he attended from early morning till late in the evening, visiting the sick whenever he was summoned; helping and consoling them,—comforting the afflicted, strengthening the weak, and relieving the needy to the point of depriving himself of even the necessaries of life. He pleased both God and man by his unassuming ways, good example, even-mindedness, and still more by his never-failing charity, which made him all to all, without respect of persons, without looking to distance of place or the inclemency of the seasons. Wherever misfortune had lighted, there was Father Bambozzi to be found; and he strove to spread consolation and relief wherever he went.

“ Weakened, and at length overpowered, by stress of work, he was taken seriously ill on the 19th of March, Feast of S. Joseph, and after four days of most violent suffering, which he bore with wondrous patience and resignation, he breathed forth his beautiful soul in Our Saviour’s embrace this morning, March 24, 1875, at the ripe age of sixty-six years. His loss is mourned not only by his own brethren but by all his fellow-townsman, whom he blessed in his dying moments.

“ Looking back on the virtuous life he led, we may have moral certitude of his having already been

vouchsafed eternal rest; but since in the most Pure sight of Our Maker even the angels are not without blemish, I commend this dear soul to your charity, that you and your community may offer prayers in his behalf according to our holy Rule. We may rest assured that he will repay our charity from on high, and obtain for us of God the grace to imitate those virtues, which raised him so highly in the good opinion of his fellow-man.

“ I remain, etc., etc., etc.,

“ BR. NICHOLAS TREGGIARI, M.C.

“Osimo, March 24, 1875.”

How truly were these words of Ecclesiasticus verified in Father Benvenuto’s dying moments: “ It shall go well with him that feareth the Lord, and in the days of his end he shall be blessed.” (Eccl. i. v. 19.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE FAVOURS VOUCHSAFED BY GOD AT THE TOMB OF FATHER BENVENUTO BAMBOZZI.

On a pleasant hillock lying westward of Osimo—which in the olden time went by the name of Monte Fiorentino and boasted a convent of Minor Observantine Friars—may now be seen a neat modern cemetery. Here were Father Bambozzi’s remains laid on the 25th of March, 1875; and from that time, in obedience to a holy impulse, people have daily resorted there from all parts to show their boundless trust in

the holy man's intercession, and to beg relief from some bodily aliment.

Many are the tombs rising in this holy ground, around which friends have mourned and wept the bitter tears of sorrow ; but amongst them all there is *one* which draws all hearts ; before which friend and stranger kneel alike in prayer : not indeed for the rest of the departed soul—for they believe it already amidst the heavenly choirs—but for some one still toiling in this weary life. It is the sepulchre of a man of God ! or rather a garden in which blooms a flower of holiness, spreading around it heavenly fragrance. Here doth the solaced heart pour forth its gratitude, exult in heavenly joy, and thank the Almighty for favours obtained through His faithful servant. Scarce three years have gone by since the holy man's remains have rested there, and were we to record all the favours which are openly spoken of as having been obtained at his tomb, this volume should needs be twice its present bulk.

In order that we may not be taunted with crediting mere hearsay, and grounding our belief on insufficient data, we shall confine our narrative to such facts only as have been brought to our notice by trustworthy persons, whose testimony is, in most cases, fully corroborated. We thus hope to fulfil this last part of our task, which will confirm beyond doubt the genuine virtues of this man of God. Here again, in order not to swerve from the laws of the Church, we disclaim giving to our narrative any authority save that which attaches to purely human evidence.

No. I.—A young person about twenty-five years of age, who had been a penitent of Father Bam-

bozzi's, shortly after her marriage was afflicted with a cancer on the breast, and her physician made no secret of the danger in which she stood. One of her friends advised her to go to Father Bambozzi's tomb, and to beg him with confidence to intercede on her behalf.

On April 18th—twenty-three days after the holy man's burial—she repaired to his tomb and there prayed for a long time with all the faith which her great need inspired; but on rising from prayer she felt sadder and more weary than ever, and reached her home with great difficulty. She then went straight to bed, slept till next morning, and on rising found herself free from pain and radically cured. The cancerous wound had healed, and her right arm, which, for some time past had been useless, was now quite free. She was, in fact, perfectly well.

No. II.—A child about four or five years old, from the parish of S. Sabinus, in Osimo, had an ugly wound under the sole of her right foot, which hindered her walking except on tiptoe. Her parents took her to the doctor, who told them that no good could be done without running the risk of crippling the child. Not knowing exactly what to do under the circumstances, they took her to Father Bambozzi's tomb on the 11th of July. Here they besought his intercession for a long time, and on rising they saw their child walking nimbly and freely on heel and toe, apparently without pain, whereas on coming thither they had been obliged to carry her in their arms. To test the thoroughness of the cure they took off her shoes and stockings, and she continued to walk perfectly well. On reaching home the wound was found

to have healed, the swelling had subsided, and a mere scar remained. The gratitude of these good people towards the holy man is truly touching.

No. III.—A young man from Monsampietraneli, domiciled in Osimo, caught a chill whilst working at his trade, which brought on a serious affection of the lungs. After a short while, the complaint grew so fearful that the physicians declared it beyond hope. On rallying a little, the young man went to his native town for change of air, and to consult some doctors, who, however, expressed much the same opinion as those of Osimo, whither he returned. As he grew worse and worse every day, an aunt of his, who had been a penitent of Father Bambozzi's, exhorted him to have confidence in the holy man, since all earthly hope was over. She forthwith began a Triduum of prayer, going on each of the days to the cemetery, and praying with great faith for her nephew's cure. On ending the Triduum, the young man felt no better; in spite of which she went a fourth day,—praying long and earnestly, after which she returned home, and found him perfectly cured! On comparing the hours, it was found that the young man had fallen asleep whilst his aunt had been praying, and that he awoke, radically cured, as she was leaving the cemetery. For a few days the young man felt a slight weakness, but his cure was radical; and no one would suspect, on seeing him now, that he had been on the threshold of death from consumption.

No. IV.—A girl about sixteen years of age had suffered for two years from an ugly sore on her right arm, which rendered it most unsightly, depriving her of its use, and causing her intense physical pain.

On being taken to the hospital she obtained some relief, though there was no hope of a radical cure. Her father then sent her to the sea-side, in hopes that bathing would do her good; but she returned much worse than ever, and was again taken to the hospital. Two wounds burst open, from which there came two small bone-splinters, and amputation was threatened. The girl herself would have submitted to the operation in order to get rid of the ceaseless pain, but her father would not consent to it. The extreme end of the forearm, at the elbow, had shifted half-way up to the upper part of the arm; so that she was now obliged to keep her arm in a sling, and she suffered night and day. During her stay at the hospital the poor girl had often been blessed by Father Bambozzi, and one day she had asked him whether she should ever be cured; on which he answered that "she was not to worry herself, as she should get well in time." As she was, however, growing worse and worse, she made up her mind, after the good Father's death, to beg his intercession in her behalf. She accordingly went to the cemetery, in company with a woman, and there prayed aloud in such pitiful accents that the by-standers were moved to pity. Turning round to them, she begged the help of their good prayers; and all, with one accord, knelt down beside her. They had been thus kneeling for about a quarter of an hour, when the sick girl tried to move her arm, at first with her companion's help, and then by herself. In doing this she noticed that the bone of her forearm had returned to its normal place, with a slight creaking sound, and that all the swelling had subsided. Then the poor girl, feeling herself

cured, turned pale and almost fainted from sudden joy ; whilst those around her were in tears on seeing that their prayer had been heard.

The girl's arm is now in a thoroughly healthy condition, except that her right hand cannot reach the opposite shoulder. This only trace of her miraculous cure is very like one recorded in Chapter XVI. (No. 8), in which the holy man told a young girl from Castelfidardo that she should get well, but that there should remain a similar token of the disease from which she had suffered.

No. V.—A peasant woman from the parish of S. Paternianus had been ailing for fourteen years from such a complication of disorders, that she lay in bed given up by the doctors, who were at their wits' end to know what to do with her. Her sickness began by an extraordinary inflammation of the throat, which afterwards extended to the bowels and stomach. From time to time she suffered from such strong convulsions that she had to be bound down, and on being set free, seemed as though dead for twenty-four hours and more. The parish Priest had been called in to see her over and over again during the last ten years, when death seemed imminent ; and Father Bambozzi, likewise, often came to see her, and invariably exhorted her to patience, saying that the Almighty willed that she should have her Purgatory in this life for her greater sanctification. In December, 1874, the last time he ever saw her, he told her that in the early months of the year she should be subject to stronger attacks than ever, and that all the symptoms of her sickness should become aggravated. As a matter of fact, on the following 2nd of February, she began to vomit.

blood almost daily, and her whole system was completely shattered. After vomiting, she suffered terrible convulsions—her teeth became tightly set, her body cramped and crippled, so that she became speechless, and was unable to take either food or rest. The poor woman suffered on in this way from February 2nd till March 22nd, when she expressed a wish of again seeing Father Bambozzi; but she was told that he was dying.

Shortly after the holy man's death, the mother of this poor creature, hearing of the crowds who flocked to his tomb, and of the graces there received, went herself to the cemetery, and found another woman scraping some dust off the brick-work around the tomb. On asking what she was about, the stranger said that one of her daughters had been ill nine months, and that she hoped to cure her with this dust taken from the good Father's tomb. Then both women after praying, took a small quantity, and each went her way. As soon as our patient's mother reached home, she gave her some of the dust, which was swallowed without difficulty, and taking the neckerchief which held the powder, she bound it round her daughter's waist. No sooner was this done, than the patient felt perfect freedom from pain; her appetite returned, and she began to feel so much better, that she forthwith rose up without help. The joy of her parents, brother, and friends knew no bounds; and she herself, though still very weak, determined to go and thank the holy man for his intercession in her behalf. Accordingly, on the 4th of September, 1875, she was placed into a carriage by four persons. During the first half of the

journey she fainted over and over again from sheer weakness, and almost seemed as though she was about to die. On going up the main road, however, leading to the cemetery, she felt her strength renewed so considerably, that on reaching the gates she wanted to alight by herself; but her brother insisted on her taking his arm. Kneeling down beside her benefactor's grave, she prayed and thanked him in the fulness of her joy ; and, rising up, she walked to the gates and stepped into the carriage without any one's help. From that day forth we, who have seen her, can testify that she enjoys perfect health, and that no one would ever dream of her having borne such racking torments during fully fourteen years of her life.

No. VI.—For six successive years, a peasant woman from the parish of Abbadia had been ailing from chronic rheumatism ; when towards the end of August, 1875, she experienced a fresh pain in her back, which made her stoop as she walked, and almost hindered her doing any work. On hearing of the wondrous cure, which we have just recorded, she made her way on foot to the cemetery with the greatest difficulty, but found the gates closed, and the sexton absent. On her way home she was so thoroughly exhausted, that she gave up all hope of ever going there again. A few days later, however, she resolutely changed her mind, and from that moment her pains began gradually to subside. She went to the cemetery with less difficulty than before, and casting herself before the holy man's tomb, besought his intercession. On rising, she felt quite free from pain, and so thoroughly cured that she walked home briskly and upright.

Cheered by this favour, she went back a few days

later to pray for her husband, who was afflicted with hernia, which compelled him to take to bed repeatedly. They began a Novena together, reciting nine "Gloria Patri" each day, at the end of which the sick man felt no further inconvenience from the rupture. At the present time both are enjoying perfect health, which they attribute to God's Mercy, through His servant's intercession.

No. VII.—In September, 1874, a poor country-woman, of the parish of S. Paternianus, had been ailing grievously during six months; when in March, 1875, seeing that her case was hopeless, she went to Father Bambozzi, and meeting him on the road, asked his blessing. And he answered, "My daughter, to-day I cannot attend to you. Do you not see that I am running to assist a dying person? I will give you the blessing another time; let me go now." Thus saying, he waved his hands three times towards her, to bid her wait patiently for the favour. This happened on March 18th, the eve of Father Benvenuto's fatal illness; and the poor woman, who wept from utter disappointment, went home to bed and grew worse than ever. Graver symptoms now set in; she began to spit blood, and her anguish was so great, that on the 24th she sent word to Father Bambozzi to come and see her. The messenger came back to say that the holy man had just breathed his last; whereupon the sick woman burst into tears, because she had failed to obtain the promised blessing. As soon as this burst of grief was over, she began to feel much better, and three days later rose from her bed hale and hearty, beyond all human expectation.

No. VIII.—In the parish of S. Lucy, there lived a woman, sixty years of age, who during twenty-six years had suffered from a complicated nervous disorder. During the first twenty-two years she had been subject to nervous fits as often as twice in the week, and these lasted some four hours. Within the last four years these attacks had become of almost daily occurrence, and were so aggravated that they affected her mind and prostrated her body. On the advice of her friends, she went to the cemetery on the 17th April, 1876, after having experienced an attack that very morning; but from that time she never again was subject to any like affliction. In order not to act rashly in so serious a matter, she waited till the 10th of June before vouching in the presence of witnesses for the following fact, viz., "that from the 17th of April, when she swallowed some dust scraped from Father Bambozzi's tomb, she had never been subject to her inveterate and distressing malady."

No. IX.—A good lady from Fallerone, in the diocese of Fermo, suffered from gouty rheumatism of the joints, which withstood every remedy. This affection had deprived her of all motive power, so that she had to be bodily taken in and out of bed, dressed, placed in her chair, and fed like a child. She had often prayed for health without avail, when in April, 1876, a brother of hers, who was a Priest, happening to read of a wondrous cure wrought at the holy man's grave, he hastened to his sister's room, gave her an account of the favour obtained, and cheered her to hope for the restoration of her health through the good Father's intercession. The helpless creature began praying with exceeding fervour, and though

it was close upon nightfall—and the hour at which she was usually put to bed—she went on praying and trying at the same time to move her limbs. After a while she found herself able to do this without help ; then, standing up, she found she could walk without pain, and forthwith undressing, she went to bed without any assistance—a thing she had not been able to do for many a long day. Her health now improved wonderfully ; in a very short while she was quite freed from her sickness, and came to Osimo with her brother, the Priest, in grateful thanksgiving to the good Father, who had pleaded so effectually in her behalf.

No. X.—A Sister of the Convent of Refuge (a home for girls and women), in Loreto, whilst working in the garden at the beginning of April, 1876, had a sunstroke. On the following day erysipelas set in, attended by most alarming symptoms. The poor Sister's mind gave way, and after two days she grew so restless, so terribly delirious, that it needed several persons to hold her in bed. The poor patient had not a moment's rest by night or day ; and on the fourth day the physician declared the case hopeless. Her confessor had called in several times to try to calm her, and to administer the comforts of religion, but he did not succeed. Then the good nuns kneeling down besought God to allow their Sister the privilege of receiving the Holy Viaticum before she died ; but in the afternoon of the sixth day, seeing her on the brink of death, and still delirious, they gave up all hope. Some of the nuns, however, bethought themselves of Father Bambozzi ; and taking his likeness, they placed it at the foot of the patient's bed, praying the holy man in all simplicity, just as if he were there amongst

them. A few moments later, whilst they were all kneeling beside the bed, the sick Sister, who had hitherto thrust everything away from her, raised herself from her bed, and fixed her eyes on the picture. Forthwith her fretfulness ceased, she joined in her good Sisters' prayers, and herself besought the holy man to intercede for her. The nuns saw at a glance that their prayer had been heard; their anxiety ceased, and gave way to holy joy When the confessor returned, half an hour later, he was astonished to find the Sister calm, peaceful, and wholly disposed to listen to his words; whilst the physician, on coming a few hours later, declared that a most unexpected change had taken place. From that moment every threatening symptom passed away, the good Sister was able to take her needful food and rest, and the following festival being Palm Sunday, the community had the pleasure of seeing her receive the palm, and assist at Mass in perfect health.

No. XI.—A young man from Montalbocco, twenty-five years of age, was taken ill with rheumatic fever, which left some distressing symptoms. He was compelled to keep his weak, powerless hands continually locked on his chest, whilst his whole frame was so enfeebled that he could scarcely move about. The director of the Third Order called in one day to see this young man, who was a Tertiary of S. Francis; and, hearing that the physician had declared that his illness would necessarily be a protracted one, he advised the patient to have recourse to Father Bambozzi, and promised to send him a piece of the holy man's girdle. On this, the young man offered up a short prayer, and, contrary to all human expectation, all

pain at once ceased, the muscles of his arms were restored to perfect freedom, and in a few days he was able to make his way to the servant of God's tomb, in dutiful thanksgiving.

No. XII.—A man from Filottrano attests that in the beginning of 1875 his little daughter, about seven years of age, began ailing from a rheumatic affection in the legs. The poor child could hardly stand at all, and suffered intense pain whenever she tried to make a step. After a year's sickness her father took her to Father Benvenuto's tomb, and caused her to be blessed with the same relics with which the holy man, when alive, used to impart blessings to the sick. After praying a good while, they turned homewards; when lo! the child began to walk nimbly, just as if she had known no illness. Her grateful father led her back to the holy man's tomb, and there heartily thanked God for the favour bestowed upon his child.

No. XIII.—For about seven years a townsman of Osimo had suffered night and day from acute pains in one of his legs, and was obliged to apply frictions and plasters on his knee every night, in order to get a few hours' rest. These frictions caused him exquisite pain, as ulcers had formed at the joints. He continued ailing in this manner till his wife and mother-in-law went and prayed for his recovery at good Father Bambozzi's tomb. Scraping some dust from the tomb, they mixed it with the plaster, which the patient put on that night as usual before going to bed. Next morning, feeling no pains, he loosed his bandages and found the surface of the skin as pink as a rose. Calling his wife, he told her of the happy event; but he was much

astonished when she told him that she knew for certain that the remedy she had applied overnight would do him good.

"What remedy?" he asked.

"The dust from Father Bambozzi's tomb," she answered.

"Then," said the man, "he is truly a Saint?"

"You can judge for yourself," replied the wife, "now that he has cured you."*

We have still many other similar facts to record, but we think that a sufficient number have been laid before an impartial reader to convince him that the virtues of Father Bambozzi are being blessed and crowned by God in no ordinary way.

CONCLUSION.

(*Adapted by the Translator for English readers.*)

In concluding this work Father Treggiari administers a severe and well-deserved rebuke to such of his countrymen who, forgetful of Italy's former greatness, think that they are honouring their fatherland by mocking God, His Church, and Priesthood.

He quotes Dante, Macchiavelli, and Gioberti to prove from the mouth of friend and foe alike the glory of S. Benedict, S. Francis, and S. Dominic, whose teachings and example—handed down in the cloister—saved medieval and modern Europe from utter barbarism.

* Father Treggiari, in closing this chapter, volunteered to give any information required concerning the cases above narrated, but as this good Religious died on the 22nd of August last, any one wishing for further particulars must apply to Father Joseph Zacchini, O.M.C., D.D., Basilica of St. Joseph of Cupertino, Osimo-Marche.

English readers will be pleased by the substitution of extracts from Professor Ruskin's delightful "Mornings in Florence," and Maitland's "Dark Ages," to my own lame translation of the passages referred to by Father Treggiari in praise of the work done by Religious Communities. Speaking of the churches of Holy Cross and S. Mary, in Florence, Professor Ruskin says:

"The two men who were the effectual builders of these were the two great Powers and Reformers of the thirteenth century: S. Francis, who taught Christian men how they should behave, and S. Dominic, who taught Christian men what they should think. In brief, one was the Apostle of Works; the other of Faith. Each sent his little company of disciples to preach in Florence: S. Francis in 1212; S. Dominic in 1220.

"The little companies were settled—one ten minutes' walk east of the old Baptistry; the other five minutes' walk west of it. And after they had stayed quietly in such lodgings as were given them, preaching and teaching through most of the century, and had got Florence, as it were, heated through, she burst out into Christian poetry and architecture, of which you have heard much talk—burst into bloom of Arnolfo, Giotto, Dante, Orcagna, and the like persons, whose works you profess to have come to Florence that you may see and understand.

"Florence then, thus heated through, first helped her teachers to build finer churches. The Dominicans, or White Friars, the Teachers of Faith, began their church of S. Mary in 1279. The Franciscans, or Black Friars, the Teachers of Works, laid the first stone of this church of the Holy Cross in 1294. And

the whole city laid the foundations of its new cathedral in 1298. The Dominicans designed their own building; but for the Franciscans and the town worked the first great master of Gothic art, Arnolfo; with Giotto at his side, and Dante looking on, and whispering sometimes a word to both.

“And here you stand beside the high altar of the Franciscan’s church, under a vault of Arnolfo’s building, with at least some of Giotto’s colour on it still fresh; and in front of you, over the little altar, is the only reportedly authentic portrait of S. Francis. Yet I can hardly blame my two English friends for never looking in” (*he alludes to two English tourists who came up with a “valet-de-place,” and did not so much as look at the “S. Louis frescoes”*). “Except in the early morning light, not one touch of all this art can be seen. And in any light, unless you understand the relations of Giotto to S. Francis and of S. Francis to humanity, it will be of little interest.

“Observe, then, the special character of Giotto among the great painters of Italy in his being a practical person. Whatever other men dreamed of he did. He could work in mosaic; he could work in marble; he could paint; and he could build; and all thoroughly: a man of supreme faculty, supreme common sense. Accordingly he ranges himself at once amongst the disciples of the Apostle of Works, and spends most of his time in the same apostleship.

“Now the gospel of Works, according to S. Francis, lay in three things. You must work without money, and be poor. You must work without pleasure, and be chaste. You must work according to orders, and be obedient.

"Those are S. Francis's three Articles of Italian opera, by which grew the many pretty things you have come to see here." (Professor Ruskin's "Mornings in Florence :" I. "Santa Croce.")

Maitland bears witness that : "Monasteries were beyond all praise, as places where God was worshipped, as a quiet and religious refuge for helpless infancy and old age, a shelter of respectful sympathy for the orphan maiden, and desolate widow—as central points whence agriculture was to spread over the bleak hills, and barren downs, and marshy plains, and deal its bread to millions perishing with hunger, and its pestilential train—as repositories of the learning which then was, and well-springs of the learning which was to be—as nurseries of art and science, giving the stimulus, the means and the reward to invention, and aggregating around them every head that could devise and every hand that could execute—as the nucleus of the city which in after days of pride should crown its palaces and bulwarks with the towering cross of its cathedral."

—(*Preface to the "Dark Ages."*)

Referring to those inconsistent beings who contend that : "Saints were well and good in their time, but are out of date now," Father Treggiari charitably points out that the Head of the Church, who is Christ, Our Lord, being the very source of Holiness, there must be, as there always have been, holy members under that Head.

"For which of the nineteen centuries of Christianity," he continues, "has ever lacked its Saints ? And in our own day have we not the Curé d'Ars, the Blessed Benedict - Joseph Labre, the Venerable Canon del Bufalo, the Venerable Strambi, Bishop of

Macerata, the Venerable Vincent Palotta, Anne Fiorelli, foundress of the 'Stimmative,' and so many others, numbered at one hundred and ninety-six by Isidore Maini di Carpi.* In the same way, then, that the village of Ars, the town of Macerata, the city of Rome, and so many other places were fortunate in harbouring chosen servants of God, so was the land of Osimo when Our Lord gave it, in the person of Father Benvenuto Bambozzi, one who, if not a Saint, at least trod the way of the Saints, emulating their virtues and their works.

" You have seen him, friendly reader, meekly bowing down before his fellow-man, holding himself inferior to others, always humble, unambitious, and without offence. In a word, he was a blameless man, who knew no enmity, but made himself all to all, spending the days of his life in penance and in relieving all kinds of affliction and suffering. These true works of love have assuredly proved his stepping-stones to heaven: God grant that the prayer of His beloved servant may bring peace to the Church, peace to his scattered brethren, who are now shut out from the holy cloisters, where so many before them, by good and well-spent lives, have proved themselves worthy of heaven and well-deserving of their country!"

* "Nuove glorie della Chiesa, ovvero i Venerabili del secolo XIX," by I. Maini di Carpi; published at Monza, 1874.

A P P E N D I X.

ON THE HOLY HOUSE OF LORETO.

As the Holy House of Loreto has been mentioned more than once during the course of this work, I trust that the following sketch may prove of interest to English readers. It refers first to the chief events connected with the history, literature, and traditions of the Holy House, and then treats more particularly of the devotion which our Catholic forefathers bore to that sacred shrine.

CHIEF EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE HOLY HOUSE.

A.D. 74.—Nazareth sacked by Titus Vespasian. The Holy House, or at least the room of the Annunciation (see Benedict XIV. *On the Canoniz. of Saints*, book iv. part ii. chap. 10; and *On the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin*, chap. 16) left uninjured.

A.D. 307.—S. Helen discovers the Holy House at Nazareth, and raises a Basilica over it, in front of which she places the following inscription : “*Hæc est ara in quâ primo jactum est humanae salutis fundamentum.*” (“This is the shrine in which first was laid the foundation of man’s Salvation.”)

The following authors refer to the Holy House and S. Helen’s Basilica :

(1) Eusebius, Bp. of Cesarea (died A.D. 338), *Life of Constantine*, book iii. chap. 42 and 45. Eusebius visited Holy Land in pilgrimage.

(2) S. Epiphanius (d. 403), *Panairon, Heresy xxx.* chap. 2.

(3) S. Jerome (d. 420), *Letters to Eustochium and Eusebius*; also in his *Holy Places of Palestine*, which he visited as a pilgrim A.D. 396.

- (4) S. Paulinus of Nola (d. 431), *Epistle to Severus.*
 (5) S. Gregory of Tours (d. 553), *History of France*, book iii.
 chap. 39; and book v. chap. 3.
 (6) Adamnan, Abbot (d. 705), *Description of Holy Land*,
 which he visited A.D. 690.
 (7) S. Bede, the Venerable (d. 735), *History of England*, book
 v. chap. 16; also *Treatise on the Holy Places*; and *Explanation
 of the Names mentioned in the Acts.*
 (8) John, Patriarch of Jerusalem (d. 969), *Life of S. John
 Damascene.*
 (9) Metaphrastes (d. 10th cent.), *Life of the Saints.*
 (10) Nicephorus Callistus (d. 10th cent.), *History*, book viii.
 chap. 30.
 (11) John Phocas (d. 12th cent.), *Description of Palestine.*
 (12) Jaques de Vitry (Cardinal) (d. 1244), *Description of
 Holy Land.* Cardinal de Vitry celebrated Mass in the Holy
 House at Nazareth on Lady Day, 1228.

Pilgrims to the Holy House of Nazareth.

- S. Jerome, Eusebius, Adamnan, etc., as above stated.
 S. Cyriacus, Bp. of Ancona (363).
 S. Petronius, Bp. of Bologna (410).
 Theodorus, Archimandrite of Cappadocia (470).
 S. Athanasius of Persia (614).
 S. John Damascene (8th cent.).
 S. John Calabita (890).
 S. Bonfiglio Bonfigli of Osimo, Bp. of Foligno (1078).
 S. Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch (11th cent.).
 Tancred, also, on becoming Governor of Galilee, sent gifts
 to the Church of Nazareth (1100).
 S. Guy (1112), William, Duke of Aquitaine (1157), and
 Godrick, an English hermit who twice visited Holy Land, as
 Matthew Paris tells us in *History of England*, temp. Henry II.
 These are some, but by no means all, the illustrious pilgrims
 whose visits to Nazareth are recorded.

A.D. 1252 (Lady Day).—S. Louis, King of France, after
 visiting Mount Thabor, went to Nazareth and heard Mass
 within the Holy House, with his retinue. He caused this event
 to be recorded by fresco paintings on the walls of the Holy
 House, which may still faintly be seen.

A.D. 1291.—The Saracens overran Galilee, sacked Nazareth, and overthrew S. Helen's Basilica.

A.D. 1291 (May 10).—First translation of the Holy House to Tersactum, near Fiume, in Dalmatia. Documents attesting this, still extant. Nicholas Frangipani, Governor of Croatia, Dalmatia, and Istria, sent a Bishop and three knights to Nazareth to gather evidence concerning the Holy House. They went accordingly, and found the foundations of the Holy House at Nazareth, which corresponded exactly with the base of the shrine lately translated to Tersactum.

When the Holy House was translated, in 1294, a second time, to Loreto, Nich. Frangipani caused a chapel to be built on the spot where it had rested ; and in this chapel we read the following inscription : “*Hic est locus, in quo olim fuit sanctissima domus Beata Virginis de Laureto, quæ in Recinati partibus colitur.*” (“This is the spot on which stood the Holy House of Our Lady of Loreto, which is now worshipped in the territory of Recanati.”)

Loreto was originally a laurel wood, forming part of the domain of Recanati.

A.D. 1294-5 (Dec. 10)—Translation to Loreto : first to a laurel wood ; then to a plot of ground belonging to two brothers, who quarrelled over the offerings to the shrine ; and lastly (1295) to a spot on the public road, on which it still stands.

A.D. 1296.—A commission of sixteen knights sent out from Recanati to Tersactum and Nazareth to investigate the identity of the Holy House. The inquiries at Tersactum were all favourable, and the old foundations were again discovered at Nazareth, corresponding exactly with the dimensions of the Holy House at Loreto. A document sealed with the arms of the town of Recanati, 12th June, 1297, still preserved in the Antici family of Recanati, confirms these facts beyond doubt.

A.D. 1296-7.—Charles II., King of Naples, sent rich presents to adorn the shrine. Kings, princes, republics, and all Christian people vied with each other in the magnificence of their offerings ; so that the treasury of the Holy House was worth millions and millions of francs when Bonaparte plundered it in 1797.

Amongst the Saints who in their lifetime visited the Holy

House may be mentioned : S. Ignatius Loyola, S. James of the Marches, S. Serafino of Monte Granaro, S. Francis of Sales, S. Francis Borgia, S. Francis Xavier, S. Louis Gonzaga, S. Cajetan, S. Francis of Paul, S. Alphonsus Liguori, S. Charles Borromeo, and Bd. Benedict Joseph Labre. S. Joseph of Cupertino, perceiving the Holy House from Osimo, was raised several feet from the ground in ecstatic rapture.

The offerings to the Holy House plundered by Bonaparte filled forty-seven cupboards (see Murri's catalogue, published in 1791).

Amongst the gifts left by the English I find the following :

(1) A heart of pure gold, with the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary traced with seventy-eight diamonds. It was adorned with fifty-seven other diamonds, together with an enamelled picture of Our Lady and another of Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I. This gift is from the said queen.

(2) Within the Holy House itself, an angel of massive gold, lavishly adorned with precious stones. The angel offers a heart to Our Lady. This heart is covered with diamonds and other precious stones ; whilst the flames issuing from it are composed of rubies. Within this heart is a small lamp, kept perpetually burning ; and its giver was Maria d'Este, wife of James II.

(3) In the treasury, a ring set with a large diamond in its centre and ten smaller ones around it, given by " Monsieur Gregoriè Monsach," of London (Gregory Monson ?), in 1766.

(4) In the treasury, a royal crown of silver, whereon is inscribed : "*Maria Virgo ora, pro Anglia.*"

(5) In the treasury, a jewel in wrought gold and garnished with ninety-three diamonds, the gift of " Cavaliere Petriz," an Englishman (Sir — Petre ?).

(6) A chalice and patten of gold, given by " Signora Margherita Carelli, Nobile Inglese."

Besides these lost memorials of English love for Our Lady, we may mention some tablets of more modern date, which may be seen on the left aisle of the Basilica as you enter, and on which is inscribed an account of the Translations of the Holy House in English, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh, if I remember rightly.

There used, moreover, in former times to be an "Opera pia,"

or charitable foundation for the English, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh pilgrims coming to Loreto. The French, German, Spanish, and Polish foundations are still kept up, but the English one has fallen into abeyance.

The Rev. Dr. John Krœger, the present English Penitentiary Loreto, has kindly lent me the fragments of a day-book kept by the English Jesuit Penitentiaries of yore, who used to dole out alms to the poorer pilgrims. Unfortunately the first seventy-two pages are entirely missing, and the remaining portion is also very defective ; a fact which will be accounted for when I mention that the MS. was found some two or three years ago amongst a heap of rubbish in the library of the Penitentiaries. I take the following extracts from the MS. as it is now before me.

Page 73 opens with March, 1698, and we find :

| | B.* |
|--|-----------|
| “ 1698. March ye 3d, to two poor Irishmen- | - - - - 5 |
| “ March ye 16, to a poor Englishman | - - - - 6 |
| “ Aprile ye 5th, between a poor English and Irishman | 8 |
| “ May ye 4, to a poore Englishman | - - - - 6 |
| “ May ye 20. To a poore Irishman | - - - - 6 |
| “ Juin ye 6. To a poor Englishman | - - - - 8 |
| “ June ye 24. To a poor Scotchman | - - - - 5 |
| “ July ye 12. To a poor Englishman | - - - - 7 |
| “ July ye 16. To a poor Englishman in great distress | 10 |
| “ July ye 21. To poor Scotchman | - - - - 5 |
| “ July ye 23. To a poor Englishman in very much want a Julie† and a half. | |

“ Received from Maestro Santi Bambino, 8 Julies on ye 20 of July for ye half year's rent, yt was due on ye 9 of May, 1698.

| | B. |
|---|-------|
| “ August 1. To a poor Irishman | - - 5 |
| “ Augst 8. To a poor Irishwoman and her son, a Julie. | |
| “ Augst 17. To two poor Irishwoemen, a Julie. | |
| “ Item to two Englishmen—2 Julies. | |
| “ October 16. To two poor Irishmen, a Julie. | |
| “ October 18. To a poor Englishman, half a Julie. | |
| “ October ye 20. To two poor Irish, a Julie. | |
| “ Fr. John Hildreth succeeded Fr. Richard Cotton in ye office | |

* Baiocchi, or half-pence.

† A giulio or paolo was worth 58 centimes, or a little more than half a franc.

of Penitentierie ye 23 of October An. D. 1698. He found—Julies left by ye same for ye Poor English. The said Fr. Hildreth staid at Loreto above a month before he had from Rome Orders for his Examen, which he made on ye same day."

The entries are then continued month by month as above ; and amongst them we find :

" April, 1699. To a poor Irish Frier à Banisht his country, a Julie.

" October, 1699. To a poor English, Beads and Medals and Pictures.

" " " To 5 poor Irish Soldiers, Oct. 23, 2 Julies.

" " " To a poor Scot, converted in Rome, Beads and Medals.

" About 12 of ye 3 nations past by this month without any alms.

" Fr. William Mansell succeeded Fr. John Hildreth in the office of Penitentiarius. He came here the 6th of Sept^{ber}, An. 1701, was examined the 8th, and took possession of his office 2 or 3 days after."

The list of pilgrims still continues as before, for instance :

" 1707. June. To an Englishman a Giuglio and a pair of old shoes.

" 1707. September. To an Irish Recolet, sick by ye way—2 Giuglio's.

" 1707. September. To A Scotchman, recommended by Fr. Forbes, 2 Giuglio's.

" 1707. October. To an Englishman, 15 Baioc : and an old waistcoat.

" 1709. September. To a poor Irishman, a Paulo.

" " September. To a poor Englishman in distress, having been robbed by ye way - - - 2 Paoli.

" " September ye 19th, to a Scotchman and an Irishman, 14 Baioccos.

" " October ye 12, to a Scotchman - - - a Paolo.

" " October ye 16, to a poor English Anabaptist for to carry him to Rome, for to be baptized and instructed in points of religion - 3 Paoli.

" " 22 November, to an Irishman, his wife and child 2 Paoli.

" " November ye 28, to an Irish recollect - - 1 Paolo."

Passing over some months, we find :

- "August, 1710. To an Irishman and his wife, a Scotchwoman, with two little children - - - 3 Paoli.
 "August, 1710. To a poor Englishman with two little children - - - 25 Baiocchi."

We find under date July 19, 1711, that Fr. Charles Baker succeeded Fr. Henry Bolt as English Penitentiary.

Here are some further extracts from various parts of the MS. :

- "(1711) March. To an Irish man, his wife and two little children - - - - - 2 Julys.
 "(1711) Aprill. To James Cassels, An Irishman, who call'd himself an Englishman - - - a July.
 "August 25, 1711. To two Benedictines who lay'd sick in ye hospital for 3 weeks - - - 3 Julys.
 "(1712) July. To an Irishman with his wife and 3 little children, in great distress - - - 15 baioc.
 "(1712) August, no new comers.
 "(1712) September. To two English Seamen converted in Rome - - - - - 15 baioc.
 "(1712) September. To a poor Scot who had suffered shipwreck - - - - - a July.
 "(1713) January. To 4 English Seamen converted in Rome - - - 2 Julies.
 "(1713) June. To a Scot with his wife and children - a July.
 "(1713) Received my rent of 5 Julies from ye German Penitentiary, and had nobody in this month to bestow it on.
 "(1715) March. To 2 Irish—Officers who came begging from France for devotion sake - - - 6 Julies.
 "Fr. John Coniers succeeded Fr. Charles Baker and arrived here on ye 10th of June, 1715, was examined upon ye 11th, took possession of his confession seat ye next day after, received from Fr. Baker 8 paoli."

A great number of leaves are here missing.

- "April 12, 1747. To James Stewart, a Scotchman in distress, who said that he had been engaged for our Prince in ye expedition of Scotland. He added yt he had upon yt occasion made over

- to his Brother a ship yt belonged to him, and had nothing left for himself - 13 Baiocchi.
- " April 17, 1747. To Nathanael Fairweather, a Hampshire man who had formerly left our Fleet and listed in ye Neapolitan service, and from thence deserted about a year and $\frac{1}{2}$ before
1 Paolo and 6 Baiocchi.
- " N.B.—I procured him his Pardon here of our Spanish penitentiary, and he returned very willingly to ye service he had left.
- " August 24, 1747. To John Reli, an Irish Anabaptist going to Rome, as he pretended, upon his Conversion, with his wife, Honorée Flanegin, also of Irish parents, but born at Nivelle - - 2 Paoli.
- " Sep. 19 (1747). To John Joran, a Black convert, who probably was born in ye English Dominions in ye Indies - - - - 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ Baiocchi.
- " Sept. 25 (1747). William Taylor, a Scotchman, partook of ye Charity left here by his Majesty James III. and his Royal Highness ye Duke of York to ye poor of Loreto.
The Black also partook of ye same.
His Majesty and Royal Highness arrived here on Wednesday evening, Sep. 20, 1747, ye Eve of St. Mathew, and departed on Sunday, ye 24 ditto after dinner.
- " Oct. 15 (1747). To Mathew Parle, an Irishman, coming from Rome and going towards France - 6 Baiocchi.
He had been here under my Predecessor.
- " Nov. 21 (1747). To ye English Black above mentioned, on his return from Rome - - - - 2 Baiocchi.
- " December, 1747. No Chapmen.
- " May 14 (1748). To Edward Windal, an English Hermite.
1 Paolo and 7 Baioc.
- " Fr. Thomas Clifton succeeded Fr. William Newton. He came directly from England, and arrived here the 6th of August, his predecessor being gone by reason of his bad health 9 or 10 months before. But the Card. Penitentiary's letter not being come, he was not approved before the 27th, and upon account of a dispute between the Penitentiaries

and the Governor, who would not allow any of the Ultramontani to have the Casuist's Confessional above the steps, he did not take his seat in the Confessional till 7th of September, the contest being then decided at Rome in favour of the Penitentiaries.

"I found for the poor at my arrival 39 Paoli, 2 Baiocchi, the Dutch Father having supply'd after Fr. Newton's departure."

The list of names then continues as before. Amongst them we notice :

"(1750) Dec. 17. To John Walton, a young Englishman well-born, converted at Macerata - - - 3 Paoli.

"(1751) Aug. 1. To 3 English Sailors converted at Rome 1 Paolo—5 Baioc.

"(1751) Dec. 2. To John Roony, an English Hermite 5 Baioc.

"(1752) Feb. 4. To Mr. Lloyd, an English convert - 10 Paoli.

"(1752) Feb. 22. To John Everson, an English Convert, 5 Baioc.

"(1752) Feb. 22. To George Patterson, a Convert - 5 Baioc.

"(1752) Oct. 10. To Timothy Maccarti, an Irishman- 6 Baioc."

This same Timothy Maccarti is commended as " honest Tim, who, if he's mauchot, has a pair of good legs, and a smooth glib tongue."

"Fr. James Lancaster, of God's own County, had the comfort to arrive here on the 9th of 10ber (1752) according as he proposed when leaving Walton, the 22nd of October. He was spiritual Father at the H. Mountain. He took up Fr. Albertus Thessier at Ghent, and came with him to Loretto through France. A little before he got to Camerano, discovering the H. House, he immediately jumped out of the chaise, and leaping and frisking all the way, he directly flew into the S. Casa, and fixing his eyes upon the statue of Our Lady was thereby thrown into a kind of rapture."

Father Lancaster, like most of his confrères, loves his joke, as will be seen by *some* of the following entries :

"(1753) April 8. To Edward Windal, Eboracensis, an extraordinary Traveller and Pilgrim, having been (he's a frightful talker) 2 years in H. Land, and Heaven knows where. I gave him a Paul, we'll suppose for once.

- "(1753) May 1. To Daniel Murphy, Corkensi, Wife Eleonora and Child - - - - - 2 Pauls.
- "(1753) July 18. Came to Recanati one Morris, born at Yarmouth, to be made (so he said) a Christian, to whom I gave a Refreshment and sent him to Rome.
- "(1754) Feb. 12. Came back from Rome Morgan O'Brien, and I gave him two girdles, which cost me a Paul, a book of mezzo Paolo, a Picture of 8 Baj., and 6 pair of Beads. As he was a sensible and modest honest Farmer, he pleased me more than all the three Hermits in a lump.
- "(1755) May 23. To Mr. John Carmichael, of Baiglie, in Perthshire, a Veil and book of the H. House.
- "(1755) June 28. To John Roker (Eng. Sailor going for conversion to Rome) a pair of shoes, which cost 15 Baj., a shirt, a jacket, and a pair of good cotton stockings.
- "(1755) Aug. 3rd. To Margaret Ould, Londinensi, and to her son Bruxellensi, two Pauls and two Veils.
- "(1755) August 21. To Margaret Tracey, with a dumb child of 3 years, a Paul, a Veil, Pair of Beads, etc.
- "(1756) April 3. To Mr. John Smith, going to Rome for conversion, 6 Pauls."

Several others are mentioned as on their way to Rome for Conversion.

- "(1756). I sent numbers of Veils this year to Monserrat and Maryland.
- "(1757) July 4th. To Mistress Toole, a Paul, on account of her great blubbering. I believe 'twas wine.
- "(1757) August 6th. To Anthony Marley, Irish, a Veil only, because he had 7 or 8 crowns of his own."

This year is described as "A very cheap year indeed!"

- "(1758) Oct. 4th. 3 Pauls for Medals, and gave 30 of them to two young Irish Franciscans, Broo and Gibson, going to St. Isidore's for Divinity, besides 6 pair of bone Beads, Veils, etc.
- "(1759) April 18th. To Marianne Toole, a Paul, Pair of Beads, etc., and to Barnaby Toole (a poor sort of an Irish toole) a very long Chapter for his simplicity.

- “ (1763) Feb. 27th. To Fr. Peter Macquire, Irish Franciscan, going to the Mission of Ireland, 1 Paul for Beads and Medals, besides 3 Veils, etc.
- “ (1763) June 2d. Gave to Mr. Tho. Tidd, Author of the Ventilator, converted by Fr. Baker at London, 5 Veils, 2 Papers of the Santa Polvere, etc., etc.
- “ (1763) June 13th. To Tho. Davis, a Liverpool man, who in his return from Rome, creeping in the dark over the Rocks, broke his Arm. To this Tom Gray I gave 1 Paul, 2 Veils, and some H. Dust.
- “ (1763) July 13th. Gave 6 Baj. for Beads and Medals to a young Irish Franciscan (to his Governor for him).
- “ (1763) July 16th. Fr. Minister (Ermannus Cardell, Germn. Penity.), gave me to-day a brown Paper full of Copper for my North and South Britons, and all the dear Joys, of a whole year.
- “ (1764) Jan. 22. After I have extracted from that cargo a Paul for a new Account Book, and the binding of S. Margaret of Cortona's Life, the load will not be very heavy. But now I think of it, perhaps the first Pilaster you meet with on the right hand of the Church, when you enter at the great Door, may supply my Successor with something substantial. You observe perfectly on that Pillar a considerable Wooden Box with this inscription : *Limosina per li constanti Cattolici scacciati dal Regno di Ibernia.*” (“Alms for the faithful Catholics driven out of the kingdom of Ireland.”) “Now I say if that same Box should chance to be full, or even half full, there will be something material for the poor Hibernians, who are far the greatest part of our Customers. I heard somebody say that there were two keys to open that machine, one for the Curate, and another for the Penity., which is all I know about the business. For I never said anything to the Curate, or anybody else in that regard since I came here. Let it be opened then in God's Name, and may the opening of it meet with good Luck!

- " Fr. Birh : Gillibrand Lancastrensis came here on the —th Jan., 1764, and found in cash 10 Pauls 6 Baj.
 "(1764) May 6. To two English Neomists with Tidd of Ventilator, everything except money.
 "(1764) May 13. To 2 Irish Friars from Prague to Rome, all civility imaginable."

The last entries are in the year 1766, and then the MS. comes to an abrupt end by half of the last page being torn out of it.

Mention is often made, amongst the entries of Father Lancaster, of a certain Father Francis Pepe, S.J., "Apostle of Naples," who, it appears, led an heroic life of sanctity, and died on the 19th of May, 1759, aged 74 years. "His Holiness," says F. Lancaster, "had a vast regard for my worthy friend Pepe, and constituting him Pope of Naples, 'tis no wonder, etc."

This holy man, writing to Father Lancaster (6th of June, 1750), says :

"As, on the one hand, I greatly fear lest the Faith be lost throughout the whole of this kingdom and city of Naples, so, on the other, have I every hope for the conversion of England."

In another letter, dated March 1, 1757, Father Pepe again writes :

" You are quite right, Reverend Father, to weep for your dear England, but I hope that the prayers of so many Saints, now reigning in Heaven, will bring her back to the true Faith, as Our Lord Himself revealed to the Ven. Father Giulio Manielli, telling him that England should have greater Saints even than before."

" But before this," adds Father Lancaster; " I should have put what he says on the 15th Jan. of the same year : 'The Mother of God can console England, and I hope She will do so ; but it will not be in our time.' I hope the holy man speaks only of his own time."

With this we will take leave of our worthy Jesuit friends, echoing a hearty "Amen" to Father Pepe's good wishes. I trust that these few notes will tend to show how deep and wide-spread was the love of Our Blessed Lady, fostered in the hearts of our Catholic forefathers ; and how, in the times of the bitterest persecution, they not only proved true to the Standard of the Cross, but even went out of their way to thank the Almighty for the wondrous Mystery of Divine Love

wrought in Mary's lowly dwelling. I should indeed feel repaid for this little work of love, if any word of mine should awaken a desire to visit that Sacred Abode, where every knee is bent with peculiar reverence as the words "Here The Word was made flesh" are uttered by the Priest in the Holy Mass : "HIC VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST."

Feast of S. John of Beverley, 1878.

THE END.



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